A SHEAF OF MEMORIES

FRANK SCUDAMORE

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A SHEAF OF MEMORIES

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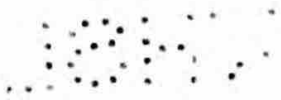

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TO

MAY

MY WIFE

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I WENT TO TURKEY in the autumn of 1875, a boy of sixteen. This was the way of it. My father, Frank Ives Scudamore, C.B., had just retired from the Secretaryship of the General Post Office. In those days there were only two Secretaries, himself and Sir John Tilley.

My father had completed his scheme for the nationalization of the telegraphic systems then prevailing in this country. He had before then founded with Mr. George Chetwynd the system of Post Office Savings Banks, which is to-day, I believe, one of the most prosperous minor assets of the State. He had introduced the postcard system into this country, and it is recorded of him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that he was the first person in Europe to employ "woman labour" in State Departments. I think that the women of this country owe to Frank Ives Scudamore a deep debt of gratitude.

My father's labours in connection with the inauguration of State Telegraphs broke him down in health. It used to be said of him in official circles of those days—and it

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was the then Lord Hartington (late Duke of Devonshire), who was Postmaster-General at the time, who started the joke—that "Scudamore walked about St. Martin's le Grand from dawn till dawn again with a saw under his arm and a gimlet in his waistcoat pocket." The late George R. Sims has told the story of how at this time the G.P.O. was seeking fresh premises for its extended business, and how (knowing that Frank Ives Scudamore was a famous after-dinner speaker, an intimate friend of Mark Lemon, Dickens, Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, and Edmund Yates) he went down to the big premises that my father was coming to inspect, in the hope of hearing from him something from which he could make copy for his paper.

He describes the episode thus:

"There was a big assemblage waiting for the great man and there was some delay, and then Mr. Scudamore came in: small, bright-eyed, eager, and alert. He walked to the middle of the floor and stood looking around him for perhaps two minutes. Then in a loud voice he said 'DAMN,' and walked out of the building."

"That," says G. R. Sims, "is the only time I met him."

The building was evidently inadequate, and knowing my father as I did, I cannot understand that he should have made any other commentary.

Well, my father carried through his scheme for the nationalization of telegraphic systems, but in the process of its development there was a difficulty with the Treasury over the necessary funds. Therefore, while Parliament dallied he acted; he went to the head of the Post Office Savings Bank Department and said, "Give me a million," and that million he employed for the fruition of his programme, which had already, of course, the approval of the Gladstone Government of the day.

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But a hostile press took note of the matter, and leading articles were published in *The Times*, which almost conveyed to the public the impression that Mr. Scudamore had gone down to Brighton, where we were known to have a house, with a million of this country's money in a small black bag. As a result my father was called to the " Bar of the House " and I believe was censured. About half an hour afterwards he received the intimation that the Government had awarded him a very considerable sum of money for his valuable services.

Some days later, after lunching with my father and his secretaries in his room at St. Martin's le Grand, he said to me :

" Frank, my boy, I have a Treasury bill in my pocket for £20,000. We will go down to the Bank of England and draw the money." We walked down Cheapside to the Bank, where my father saw, I think it was Mr. May, who was the chief cashier. The interview was quite brief, and he came out and stood before a " teller " at the Bank counter.

" How will you have it, Mr. Scudamore ? " said this gentleman.

My father said, " Oh, notes."

And the sum being handed over to him, we left the building.

There was some jostling in Cheapside, and when we got back to St. Martin's le Grand the first words Mr. Leonard Bidwell, my father's private secretary, said were, " Good God, sir, what has happened to your clothes ? "

He found then that his light overcoat and frock coat had been sliced as though with a razor, and that his pocket-book, watch and chain, and sovereign purse had disappeared.

But he had thrust the notes loosely into his trouser pockets, and they were intact.

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This as I have said was early in 1875, and at that time the Government of Turkey, playing off as was its wont one great European Power against another, was disposed to treat England as the "most favoured nation." To this end the Sultan Abdul Aziz invited Her Majesty's Government to lend him for a term a high postal official to re-organize the postal and telegraphic system of the Ottoman Empire, and enable that country to become a party to the Postal Union of Berne. Lord Hartington and Lord Granville—both good friends—suggested to my father that he should take on the job. He did, made such terms with the Porte as seemed suitable to him, and went to Constantinople in the following September, taking my mother and the family with him.

In those days there was only one means of getting to Constantinople, and this was by Messageries steamer from Marseilles. The Balkan Railway was not completed till many years later, though Baron Hirsch's contract had already gained him his many millions of profit.

So it was on a Messageries steamer that we reached the Turkish capital.

Since those years I have been a constant, almost a yearly visitor to Constantinople, but in these later days I have generally journeyed there by the "Orient Express" or the "Ostend Train de Luxe."

This mode of travel gives one the worst conceivable first impression of the Byzantine capital. The train, slow going, carries one through the "gate of the Seven Towers" (of whose grandeur one sees nothing at all) and through a series of sordid Greek, Jewish, and Armenian suburbs, whose aspect is even more repellent than are the outer slums that we traverse on our approaches to London.

But to approach Constantinople from the sea in the dawn of a bright September day is to receive a picture of

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marvellous beauty and gorgeous perspectives that remain, fixed indelibly on the mind.

For my own part the delight of that scene has never left me from then till now.

We lay at anchor in mid-channel off Seraglio Point. On the one side of us spread the giant walls of the ancient Byzantine city, with stretching to the shore the quaint, old-world, almost Chinese, buildings of the old Palace of the Sultans—the Eski Serai of Stamboul. There was open to our view the great round hole in the Palace wall, where the heads of offenders against the State used to be exhibited to the public; and a little domed building near by with a window, from which the Sultans were wont to personally inspect these grim witnesses to their authority.

Hard by again rose the glistening buildings of the Treasury, within which Turkey's most precious possessions lay guarded by a host of white eunuchs—(mostly Europeans); there were a few left even in my day. Just beyond opened the famous Golden Horn, with its two quaint dilapidated bridges that link Stamboul with Pera (the European quarter of "Der Saādet," the City of "Happiness"). And as we looked around we could view with one glance the brilliant entrance to the Bosphorus, aglow with its many palaces and villas and verdant hills clad with clematis and virginia creepers, burning bright scarlet and orange, while away looking to the other side rose the cliff of Scutari with the great red barrack, where Florence Nightingale tended our men; and the monument-crowned cemetery which records the tale of our Crimean dead. The sun gleamed on all these places, lighting the thousand windows with a fairy glow. The cypress trees, the slender minarets, the white marble palaces, fretted like frostings on a wedding cake; the quaint old-world craft that rocked between us and the shore—zebeqs

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mahones, feluccas, and caïques, with their gaudy sails and rich colouring, lent an added beauty.

And this was Constantinople, the famed capital of the Near East, which to every boy who had read the *Arabian Nights* was a land of mystery and desires.

Of course, our eagerness as youngsters to get ashore was damped by the fact that we had to wait for the Turkish official reception to my father. This naturally was delayed; for although great Turkish Ministers were, and I think still are, invariably early risers, they did not get quickly into harness even to receive the Sultan's latest imported favourite. Indeed, Sir Phillip Francis (our Consul-General) and Admiral Hobart Pasha (the English head of the Sultan's Navy), and all the most prominent members of the English community, had come on board to welcome my father long before the Sultan's representatives made their belated appearance.

But they came at last in a gorgeous Palace caïque, with twenty-four rowers in gold-embroidered red waistcoats, floating bishop's sleeves of Broussa silk, and voluminous pleated white linen drawers; and they made an impressive entry up the gangway.

There were a few ceremonial salutes, some cordial handshakes and salaams, and we were, I suppose, citizens of Turkey with my father established in his high office.

We got ashore. In those days there was only one hotel in Pera for English travellers, and that was run by Missiri —Missiri who had been Kinglake's interpreter throughout the Crimean war, and as Dragoman was somewhat of a hero in his delightful book *Eothen and Lutfullah*. To this establishment we therefore went. It was, I must think, perhaps the most dismal caravanserai in Eastern Europe: a dim, dark, gloomy house at the top of Pera High Street facing the spacious Russian Embassy. Its nominal proprietor, the famous Missiri, was now merely a figure-

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head—an advertisement to attract tourists. He used to sit in the dark tomb-like hall—a crumbled, shivering figure—throughout the daytime, and at night, when he had obtained a few "liras" or "medjidiehs" from sympathizing guests, would slink off to gamble with them at one or other of the snide gaming saloons that made the night-life of Pera's "Grande Rue."

We lived in that hotel for a number of weeks. Constantinople at that time still retained a remnant of its former glories as an exotic capital. The Empire was decadent; limbs had repeatedly been lopped off from Turkey's dominions, which were dwindling—so far as Europe was concerned—to the mere possession of the province of Bulgaria, whose lurid history had become a horror to European minds. But Constantinople was still prosperous, luxuriating ever, through a continued influx of foreign money. All the old brightness was in Pera's streets. The Turks (of the middle class) who peopled Stamboul were soberly garnering the profits earned from the outlay of the thousands of European tourists who poured week by week into the Sultan's city. The gloom that came later with Abdul Hamid had not yet stricken the place. There were holidays three days a week, owing to the fact that every festival, Greek, Catholic or Gregorian, Armenian or Turkish, was observed by the entire community; and, greatest joy of all, there was but one post weekly that linked Turkey with the world beyond.

Every festival was kept up by all classes of the native populace. The bitter persecution of the Armenians had not yet begun. That was the outcome of the war that was so soon to follow. Daily in the squares and wide open places of the city the gay dances of these peoples took place. Armenians, Greeks, Croats, Albanians, all of them Turkish subjects and each in their distinctive national dress, mixed happily and contentedly together. The

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Padishah was over all, but his rule was benign, and might have remained benign but for the interferences of Europe. It is said that the extravagances of the Palace were world astounding. It may be so, but Abdul Aziz always paid his bills. Certainly the display of the marvels of his resources had a quality that might dazzle all eyes. I recall the daily parade of the Sultan's 600 beautiful Arab stallions—every one of them pure white or a pinky grey—slim limbed, arched backed, flowing tailed, and each led by a groom in the gorgeous turquoise blue and gold livery of the Court; I recall the long array of black-coated eunuchs and brilliant garbed coachmen who sat each morning beneath the plane trees, outside the lofty wall of Dolma Bagtché Palace. I recall also—and how could one forget it?—the weekly holiday enjoyed by the ladies of His Majesty's household. Every Friday hundreds of the great Palace carriages, resplendent with silver rails and lanterns, used to invade the High Street of Pera, which was Europe to these harem women. It was their one day of relief in the week, and so well recognized that, as an act of intuitive courtesy, European males left the street entirely to them. Each gorgeous vehicle held its complement of four and sometimes five refulgent beauties, brilliant in feradjis of bright-hued silks and veiled with the flimsiest yashmaks that imagination can conceive, under which a Parisian toque or bonnet gleamed with flower decorations. The black-clad eunuch on the box of each coach was the nominal guardian of his party.

One quaint fancy of these ladies—an outcome perhaps of their own claustration—was the visit of nearly every one of them to the numerous shops in the Grande Rue, where song-birds in small cages were for sale. They would purchase these feathered flutterers by the cage full, simply for the purpose of setting them free. It was a generous impulse, and it gave us an insight to the minds of these

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harem recluses; but, like other good impulses, it was mistaken, because the kites and the great hawks that hung always over the Bosphorus shores had long since come to recognize that Friday was for them a feast day.

It was in winter that the Imperial ladies visited the Grande Rue. With the spring, when the sun grew warm enough, the venue was changed, and the weekly holiday was spent at the Sweet Waters of Europe. This was a stretch of green sward in a valley, called Keeyat Hané (the paper mill—one such—a royal possession, had once existed here). The chosen and natural pleasaunce spread along the bank of the extreme head of the Golden Horn—narrowed here to the dimensions of a quite modest river. It was an ideal picnic ground, richly turfed, dotted here and there with bosky clumps of pleasant trees—among them the perfumed mimosa, beneath each of which was a carpet of violets, and with the banks aglow with tulips, wild hyacinths, and crocuses, interspersed with bright patches of maidenhair fern.

This delicious spot was the holiday resort, not only for the Palace harem dames, but was eagerly sought by all classes of the native community. The waters of the Horn were each week so densely packed with caïques and sandals that for a full mile one might anywhere step over them from one shore to the other. Spread Boulter's Lock, on Ascot Sunday, to that extent, and you have a parallel. A wide path wound snakily down the lofty side of the valley from the road above which led to Pera, and though it twisted on itself half a dozen times ere the plain was reached, it was so steep that many women feared to tackle it, but leaving their carriages above, would crowd down it afoot, a closely packed throng, like a long parti-coloured ribbon.

Many thousands of persons came ever to Keeyat Hané: troops of horsemen, well mounted and with gay saddle

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cloths; bands of young men, afoot, whose joy it was to run down the lofty cliff face, a dozen abreast with little fingers linked.

And on the grass below the place was like a fair. Innumerable family parties held revel on the stretch beside the stream; seated on spread carpets, each woman with a gaudy sunshade which vied in brilliancy the hue of her feradji. Many parties, of course, brought their own refreshments, but there was always present an army of pedlars of coffee, kabobs, ices, cakes, sweetmeats, and fruit of all descriptions. The elders and the girls sat on their rugs and sipped and nibbled and smoked, the children rolled about on the sward, and hundreds of young men rode mad races along the wide plain alongside the giant aqueduct built by the Emperor Justinian to feed his capital. There were no police present—none were required.

To all classes of the community existence was joyous and happy in the clear light of day. To us children, who had had our pleasant homes in London, Kent, and Brighton, it was a revelation of fairyland.

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CHAPTER II

LIFE IN THE SULTAN'S CAPITAL

Domestic life in the Sultan's capital. Old-world conveyances. Sedan chairs. Travelling tradespeople. Inability of Turks to produce manufactured goods. Flexible Customs laws and our experiences.

AT THAT DAY Constantinople was a city of strange anomalies and surprising contradictions. There was gas in Pera High Street, but in most of the rest of the town, and certainly throughout all Stamboul, there was no attempt at public lighting, and folk who had to be abroad at night were preceded by servants carrying huge oiled linen lanterns in which were set six or eight candles. All houses were lit by paraffin lamps, and the vast majority were heated by the *mangal* charcoal brazier, though in wealthy European establishments the huge Viennese porcelain stove—it consumed logs—was beginning to take its place. There was a funicular tunnel railway that carried thousands of passengers daily from Galata, on the shore, up through the steep hill to Pera High Street, and there was a horse tramway—a ludicrous conception (where each car was preceded by a running man with a brass horn)—that doddered through the streets and round by the British Embassy and out to the confines of the town ; and yet at each street corner were stationed groups of saddle-horses for hire, each with its groom (who held on to the tail while you rode), and for which the fare was but a few piastres per hour. There were thousands of these horses in Constantinople in those

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days—all of them sturdy, well-fed little beasts—I have myself bought several of them for my own use and was never better served—and it was in their stables (sometimes housing as many as 300 beasts) that I first noted the practice of housing horses on three floors of a building, with inclined ways leading to each floor. Again, there were cabs and landaus for hire; but every decent house had at least one sedan chair in its hall, and in such a case as our own had its own staff of chair-men. My mother and sisters never went out to dinners or balls, save thus carried, and with a lantern-man and an armed cavass leading the party. Nearly every house had its well, but this water was used only for washing purposes. We bought our drinking supplies at the door from a soodji, who led a string of asses laden with sweet water from known sources, packed in goat-skins.

Most perishable food commodities were purchased at the door. Milk was supplied by goat herds who came around with their flocks, each nanny with her kid afoot nestling against her udders, which were bound up in grass cloth to prevent illicit pilfering. The butcher, the fish-man, the oyster dredger (we had our own oyster park at Arnaut-Köi staked off in the swirling Bosphorus), hawked their wares from house to house—there was no other means of trafficking. Yet there was an admirable French butcher and there were restaurants whose luxury and resources could have rivalled anything in Paris. There were admirable French milliners and *modistes* in the Grande Rue, and an English tailor who had been a head cutter at Poole's. He did well, this gentleman. He dressed the Sultan and his whole Court—they always paid their bills—and everyone who could pay his prices. When last I heard of him—just before the war—he owned a fine estate, a splendid steam yacht, and several streets of houses. Yet all the humbler Europeanized

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Levantines dressed in "reach-me-down" suits made in Austria.

The Turks could not make matches—these were all imported Viennese and Italian; could not grind their own corn—it was all milled in Odessa; could not even make their own national head-dress, the fez, whose supply was the monopoly of three Hungarian firms.

The Customs laws were rigid—on paper—the importation of firearms—revolvers, pistols, shot-guns—was strictly prohibited. Yet there was one main street in Stamboul filled from end to end with armourers' shops, and all with full displays in the windows. These goods had all been smuggled in, but being in, could be publicly displayed and sold; and as in those days every Moslem Turkish subject went abroad with a beltful of pistols and daggers, the fire-arm business prospered. This absurdity of legislation continued for many years—may be it is still in force. Here is an exemplar of its contrariness in practice. Years later—it was in 1896—I went as usual to Constantinople, and made, of course, at once to the British Embassy. There I found the Chancellerie convulsed with merriment over a record instance of Turkish administration. Sir Adam Block told me the story. An Englishman living somewhere in the interior had ordered from home a pair of shot-guns. When they reached Constantinople they were at once seized by the Customs Authorities, who, despite all protests, refused to give them up. Volumes of correspondence passed between the Embassy and the Porte, but the Turks remained immovable. The controversy had become heated, almost acrimonious, when one day a famous sportsman and traveller walked into the Chancellerie fresh from the train terminus to "pay his respects." Block looked at him, amazed.

"What have you got there?" he cried.

"What do you mean?" asked the sportsman.

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"On your shoulder?" said Adam Block, pointing.

"Oh, it's only my old Benduk," said the visitor nonchalantly, and explained that it was a favourite gun, and that as he didn't like to lose sight of it, he had carried it thus from the train, through the Customs and across the bridge, and up Step Street (wanting exercise), to where he now stood in the Embassy room. And, of course, without a word said.

As an old French Ambassador said to me long ago:

"La Turquie est un pays d'opéra bouffe." I have always thought he was right.

When we reached the Sultan's capital—a party consisting of my father and mother, ten children, a governess and several English servants—we had, of course, a mountain of luggage, while another ship held a cargo of those favourite bits of furniture from which no woman will ever willingly part. To pay the Customs duty of 8 per cent. on all these matters would have meant a very heavy outlay.

My father therefore asked a high Turkish functionary—a charming man, with whom and his no less delightful wife we had been fellow passengers on the steamer—whether, in view of the fact that he was now an official of the Porte, any relief could be granted him in this matter.

"Ne vous frettez pas," said Ternau Bey. "It will be arranged."

And of course it was. Some days later a visitor was announced to us at Missiri's, heralded by Ternau Bey's card of introduction.

He entered—a resplendent figure, in a uniform of blue heavily braided with gold, that could not have cost less than a hundred pounds—and announced with beaming smiles that all our goods—heaped high on a long train of buffalo waggons—were blocking the High Street outside the hotel and awaiting our instructions.

My father, somewhat disconcerted, fumbled for his

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cheque book; but no, there was nothing to pay. The smiling, courteous, handsome officer even declined lunch and modestly withdrew.

My father—ignorant, of course, of Turkish ways—was perplexed and almost distressed. He hastened to consult Ternau Bey and to express his thanks for the Porte's courtesy.

"Oh!" said Ternau airily. "He has nothing to do with the Porte or with the Customs. He is a humble Palace official. Give him three pounds, and he'll be quite satisfied. This is how he lives."

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CHAPTER III

YILDIZ. THE ASSASSINATION OF ABDUL AZIZ

The origin of Yildiz. The gardener's house and its beautiful gardens. The plot to remove Abdul Aziz from the throne. Hussein Avni and the Army. The Sultan's life. The sunken treasure-house. Traitors in the camp. The mad Sultan's suspicions. We are roused from sleep and find our house surrounded by troops. The scene from the roof. Abdul Aziz a prisoner in his harem. Murad proclaimed Sultan and Caliph. The murder of Abdul Aziz. His Circassian wife. Her brother's vengeance and fate. The tragedy of Murad. His English wife and her sons. John Burns's sister Elizabeth.

PROPERLY SPEAKING, of course, the Sultan's Palace of Yildiz—the Kiosk of the Star—is the house on the hill, but inasmuch as this of which I write was originally in Yildiz's gardens at a time when Yildiz itself had not bloomed into fame and world-wide malodour as the residence of the crime-stained Abdul Hamid, I give to it the name by which it was known in those days. The house, as I have said, was situated in a corner of the gardens of Dolma Bagtché Palace, that huge, white marble structure on the Bosphorus shore which was the favourite residence of Sultan Abdul Mejid, and after him of his nephew the Sultan Abdul Aziz. Yildiz Kiosk was in those days merely a summer-house on a somewhat exaggerated scale, on the hilltop in the Palace gardens. It was a smaller and by far less imposing edition of the house to which I am referring. That house, also destined at the outset to be a resting-place for the

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"Padishah," wearied by a 400 yards' climb up the scented hill-slopes of his luxurious garden, had been built, at the Sultan's command, by his German head-gardener. When completed, Abdul Mejid paid a brief visit to the place, and spent, I believe, nearly as much as a whole afternoon within its walls. After which, in accordance with the pleasant practice of potentates of that time, he bestowed it upon the fortunate German author of its being. It needed but half a dozen words to the imperial architect to separate this alienated property from Yildiz grounds. Very soon high walls girdled "the house on the hill"; a new road was traced through what had formerly been a velvet sward; the Yildiz menagerie was shifted a hundred yards farther into the park; the miniature model of the Sydenham Crystal Palace, which is the present Sultan's favourite conservatory, was lifted bodily from its foundations and reconstructed elsewhere; and the isolation of the German gardener's new acquisition was effected. In due course the gardener died, bequeathing his master's gift to his widow, and from that widow we leased the house in the autumn of 1875. It was, for a kiosk, a somewhat imposing mansion, being nearly as big, indeed, as the white marble palace of Beyler Bey, which gleams like a jewel amid the dark woods on the Asiatic shore. Possibly the German had added to it after it became his; anyhow, it contained huge halls, wide marble stairways, and lofty carved galleries, all of that dazzling white dear to the Oriental eye. Its gardens were very beautiful, and, as may be readily understood, the German gardener had planted them with every rare and beautiful flower, tree, and shrub. I recall a camelia tree that yielded no less than 1,500 blossoms in that one winter; magnolia trees that reared their crests as high as the first-floor verandahs, and demanded the care of three gardeners to tie up their abundant blooms. All other flowering plants were in

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like profusion, and the walls of the great stone fountain and the reservoir were bright with maidenhair, which the Turks call "the plant that grows in the well."

The high wall and narrow roadway, and yet another great wall, alone separated us from "Yildiz." At night we could hear the lions roaring in the imperial menagerie; we could hear the zithers and guitars of the Sultan's orchestra; we could, from our roof, watch the ladies of the imperial household strolling in the gardens, and running races and playing at ball on the lawns, or rowing themselves about the tiny lake; and we could also, gazing down the hill, see almost into the windows of the great Palace of Chiraghan, which lay alongside Dolma Bagtché. At our gates—whether placed there as a bulwark against our Christian curiosity, I know not—was a *caracol*, or guard-house, and with the soldiers that peopled this station—a company, I think it was, a hundred strong—and with the officer commanding them, we were always on terms of most cordial amity. At the time of which I have to write, the officer commanding was a charming young fellow, whose father had served under the English flag in India, whose mother was an Irish lady, and who had himself served his apprenticeship in that best of all schools for soldiers, the "Royal Irish Constabulary." Poor Yussuf! he fell by my side at Baker's Battle of El Teb, in the Soudan, that disastrous battle—almost might I call it a massacre—in which we, the attacking force, lost 2,700 men out of 4,000 within the space of a quarter of an hour, and in which I had the great good fortune to be one of the *six* European survivors of our panic-stricken square.

A few persons in Constantinople were aware, in the early spring of 1876, that it was the intention of the great and enlightened men who sought at that time to avert the doom that threatened the Ottoman Empire, to remove

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the Sultan Abdul Aziz from the throne. Those great men—Hussein Avni Pasha ; the stern iron-browed *Serasker*, Minister of War ; Midhadt Pasha, Prime Minister ; Kaïsserli Pasha, Minister of Marine ; and the Sheikh-ul-Islam, who is to the Faithful what the Pope is to Catholicism—had decided, and most wisely decided, that the danger threatening the Ottoman State could only be averted by the stringent step they contemplated. Hussein Avni held the whole Turkish army in the hollow of his hand. In the barracks of Constantinople were massed at that time some 50,000 men, none of whom knew or cared for their master, the Sultan, but all of whom were ready to meet death at the lifting of the finger of their master, the *Serasker*. There is little doubt that Abdul Aziz himself, mad though he unquestionably was, was well aware of the power that rested in Hussein's hands, and it is certain that he both feared and hated his War Minister. He was coquetting at the time with Prince Ignatieff, Russian Ambassador, and a very prince among diplomatists, and it is probable that he believed that by his blandishments he might be able to avert the catastrophe that overhung his empire. But his manner of life—his deep potations of sparkling brandy ; his daily increasing mania for jewels and gold, that mania that inspired the creation of a sunken treasure-house in the midst of a lake in the Palace grounds ; together with his habit of isolating himself (sometimes for a period of weeks) within the secret places of the haremlik, where none of his Ministers might seek him, no matter how important the issue—had made of him so irresponsible and untrustworthy a Prince, that the truly great men of the empire—and there were great men in Turkey at that time—were forced to the conviction that if the tottering fortunes of the State could in any way be bolstered up, the first imperative step must be the removal of the State's mad master.

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The *coup* was decided upon; the ***Fetvah*** of the Sheikh-ul-Islam (without which no Sultan may be removed from the throne) had been obtained; the heads of the army of Constantinople had been apprised—though they knew not wherefore—to hold themselves in readiness for a sudden call; but the hour and the day for the *coup d'état* had not been decided upon. And then, as so often happens, the intended victim became, by some means, aware of the plot trammelled against him. Instantly, he sent to the *Seraskierat*, and summoned Hussein Avni to his presence. His intention, of course, was to detain the ***Serasker*** as a prisoner at Chiraghan, possibly even to put him to death in that quiet, unquestionable manner which it is an Eastern potentate's privilege to employ. The War Minister, however, knew that the summons to Chiraghan could have for him but one signification, and that a disaster. He pleaded illness, therefore, sent his aide-de-camp to his imperial master with a well-turned tale of his supposed suffering, and with a pretended offer to have himself conveyed, if need be, on a stretcher to the Sultan's presence, and, this done, applied himself to the immediate execution of the plan already wellnigh matured by himself and his colleagues. He knew that but little respite would be vouchsafed him; that the mad Sultan's suspicions, once aroused, would never again be allayed; and that, if he were to strike at all, the blow must be delivered at once. And with Hussein Avni, to decide was to act. A council was hurriedly held at the Minister's private house; aide-de-camps scattered quadrivious to the various heads of the garrisons barracked round the capital; and soon after nightfall an army was gathered round the Palace of the doomed monarch. The soldiery, I believe, ignored to a man the purpose for which they were assembled under arms. Talk was put about of a review to be held at Eski-Serai on the morrow. (Eski-Serai, it may be said,

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is the corner of Stamboul on the shores of the Marmora and Golden Horn, where each new Sultan is acclaimed by the army, as representing the Ottoman nation.)

In the middle of the night we, in "the house on the hill," were roused from sleep by the measured tramp of an armed host passing our walls, the rattle of accoutrements, and the ordered words of command spoken low. Dressing hurriedly, I went to a postern-gate in the garden wall that gave upon the road, but found my passage barred by a sentry. "Getchmez," he said ("You cannot pass"); and when I queried wherefore, his only reply was, "Yassak" ("It is forbidden"); and then Yussuf came to me. "What is happening?" he said. "I do not know. Yildiz gardens are surrounded by a cordon; this road is lined with troops, extending to the gates of Chiraghan; and both on the shore side and the water front of the Palace itself are massed some 15,000 men. For my own part, I have been placed here more to protect you and your household than for any other purpose."

Unable to go out, I sought the flat roof of "the house on the hill," and gazed thence through the night towards Chiraghan. The tramp of troops continued awhile; the air seemed filled with a stir and rumour of agitation; and then, of a sudden, all the hundred darkened windows of Chiraghan became illumined as by one single lightning flash, shadow-like forms could be seen hurrying to and fro within the many chambers of that huge Palace. Almost we could hear, and certainly we could well imagine, the surprise, the terror, and the distress awakened behind those half-closed jalousies; and while yet the stress of the emotions thus aroused was full upon us, there broke, of a sudden, upon our ears the rhythmic beat of oars; and, just as the first grey glimmer of the coming dawn brightened the eastward sky, we saw the huge bulk of the Imperial caïque, manned by its twenty-four rowers, emerge

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from the shadowed gloom of the marble steps, and pull towards Seraglio Point, where its approach was hailed with cheers and acclamations by the soldiery drawn up on the quayside of Eski-Serai. The *coup d'état* had succeeded. Abdul Aziz was a prisoner in his own harem, and Murad V—poor, shrinking, trembling, craven Prince—had been dragged from his bed by Hussein Avni, and, in full expectation of immediate dissolution, had been taken to Stamboul to be acknowledged Emperor of the Turks.

The tragic sequel of that memorable night's work is worth recording here. The captive Sultan had, of course, as is ever the case in Turkey, a considerable following, whose existence constituted a formidable menace to the success of the plans of Midhadt and Hussein Avni. It was decided, therefore, that the deposed monarch must die. His madness, it may be said, had gravely increased under restraint, and at the time when the decision of the Council of Ministers was put into force he was little better than a wild beast. His two favourite wrestlers—men who had risen to fortune by his largesses—were the appointed instruments of his execution. They held him down in an armchair in an apartment adjoining his bath-room, while his barber cut the arteries in each arm at the elbow with those long pointed scissors peculiar to Turkey and to Persia. The Sultan screamed, and fought, and struggled; the wrestlers held on, the barber snipped, and in the middle of the operation the fallen monarch's favourite wife entered the room. Grasping the situation, this young Circassian lady threw herself upon the murderers and fought with them for her master's life. Her efforts were, of course, vain; she was dragged off, and, fainting, conveyed to her own apartments, while the horrid work was brought to its close.

So perished Sultan Abdul Aziz.

This was not, however, all the tragedy. Nemesis waited

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on the murderers. A brother of the Sultana favourite was an aide-de-camp to His Majesty. He was a wild and turbulent fellow, called, by sobriquet, Tcherkess Hassan, who owed such promotion as he had attained to his sister's good offices. It chanced that he visited his sister on that fatal morning, and that she, in her frenzied despair, recounted to him what had befallen their lord. He sought to see her again the next day; but by that time she had disappeared, never more to be seen alive. He then vowed vengeance, and publicly denounced the Sultan's murderers. Those gentlemen were apparently unwilling to destroy him, or, at any rate, were disposed to eliminate Tcherkess in some quiet manner. He was given a command at Konieh (which is, in Turkey, a polite form of exile), and was ordered to start forthwith for his new post. Hassan knew that if he sought vengeance he must act promptly. He did so. He was to leave Constantinople on the morrow. That night, armed with two revolvers and a dagger, he sought out Hussein Avni at his private house. A Council of Ministers was being held there, the *Serasker* presiding. Hassan's palace uniform and aiguillettes gained him ready and unquestioned admission. He entered the council chamber, walked up to Hussein Avni, who sat at a desk, and shot him through the head. He then turned quickly and fired at one after another of the assembled Pashas, three of whom he killed. Kaïsserli Pasha, Minister of Marine, seized him from behind by the arms; but Hassan, drawing a dagger, struck back at the Minister, and wounded him in four places. By this time, however, the noise of the shots and the uproar had brought assistance. Soldiers and servants rushed into the room, and the desperate man was speedily overcome. It has been told me, indeed, by a servant of the household that he had received over 200 bayonet stabs before he was removed.

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It chanced that I saw the last act in this historic tragedy. I had slept at St. Stephano, on the Marmora shore, and was riding back through Stamboul and Pera to the "house on the hill." I crossed the Golden Horn by the "old bridge," and, as I neared the Galata shore, became aware that some stirring event was toward. A lofty archway spans the bridge at either end, and in that on the Galata side an iron ring hangs from the arch's centre. A great crowd of soldiers was marching down the hill and on to the bridge-head, and in the midst of the soldiers was a bullock wain, and in the wain a rough mattress on which was stretched a man. The cart was halted beneath the arch, and a rope, which had been reeved through the ring, was adjusted round the neck of the recumbent figure. A word of command rang out, and in another moment the body of Tcherkess Hassan, avenger of his murdered master, and that master's murdered wife, swung high, full 40 feet, above the heads of the populace.

The story of Murad was a tragedy. A prisoner whose sole relief was brandy during many years and in constant fear of death, for that was in those days the heritage of those near the throne, he was wholly unfitted when the position fell to him to assume any office of responsibility. As Sultan he lasted but five months, at the end of which time the Council of Ministers decided that he was *non compos mentis*, and a *Fetvah* of the Sheikh-ul-Islam deposed him from the Sultanate, and Abdul Hamid, his younger brother, was placed on the throne. Yet Murad was in his way a good, clean-living man—after his deposition he lived in a state of partial captivity in a palace close to Chiraghan until 1917—and, though not many people know it, he was married to but one wife, and she was an Englishwoman. It was one of the romances that flowered on the shores of the Bosphorus. The lady was the daughter of a milliner in Pera, a charming, handsome, rather stately

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looking girl, with whom—who knows how?—the young heir to the throne of Turkey had formed acquaintance. So one day she disappeared from her mother's shop in the High Street and intimation was a little later received by her parents that she was safe and would be well looked after. I never saw the lady after this happening, but "Elizabeth" met her frequently at State marriages and other great ceremonial occasions, at which she was always a favoured guest, and when sometimes the English Sultana had with her her two slim, pretty sons. Murad had no other wife beside this lady, and it could indeed be conceived that in a reconstructed Turkey of a later day a half-English Padishah should fill the throne.

But Elizabeth—she indeed deserves a chapter to herself, and I wish that I could give it to her. I knew her for nearly forty years as one of the best and most delightful Englishwomen in the Near East, ever a tower of strength to her countrymen. She was the eldest sister of Mr. John Burns, who was so long a prominent figure in our political world. She had married a Woolwich Arsenal artificer, who with others had been borrowed to the Turkish Service in the spacious days of Abdul Aziz. There were a number of these excellent folk who, following out the great principle of the British working man of doing no work if work can be avoided, completely satisfied their Turkish employers and drew their very handsome salaries and pensions during many long years.

They assimilated Turkish principles to the extent that some of them founded a little Anglo-Ottoman colony over on the far shore of Stamboul—a community where half the English girls were married to Turkish husbands, while half the English boys had Turkish wives.

Mrs. Shelton Pasha—that was Elizabeth—after the death of both her husbands, ran an hotel in Galata in the "Street of Pots," close to the China Mosque, and there

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she used to entertain in her bountiful way Princes and Pashas and English Peers and travellers. She was for many years, I must suppose, one of the best-respected and best-known women in all Turkey—a figure comparable in some ways to that wonderful Englishwoman who until a few years back lived in Mecca and devoted her life to the succour of starving pilgrims.

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CHAPTER IV

SOLDIERS, ADVENTURES, AND VISITORS

Camille Barrère. His wit and humour. Barrère's compatriot and the Levantine merchant. Colonel Borthwick and his decoration. Colonel Valentine Baker and his illness. The Sublime Porte and security of office. Hobart Pasha *persona grata* at Marlborough House and the Sultan's Palace. Turkey's most able naval officer admits his difficulties. "Malta Yok." The sailors' storeroom. Notable visitors and correspondents. Fred Burnaby, a pen-picture. Recklessness of the man. Knivett Wilson wins his V.C. General opinion of Burnaby's merit. How he met his fate. Baker's despair over El Teb. Fights again with his old regiment, the 10th. Is struck by a shell fragment. I accompany him to Sir William Hewitt's yacht. Baker's heroism. His serious wound.

TURKEY'S DIFFICULTIES and the imminence of a war that everyone knew must prove a catastrophe for Europe brought a vast host of adventurers to Constantinople. They flocked to the Sultan's capital just as no doubt their forbears had flowed into Paris in 1812. They came from all parts of the earth. Indians, Chinese, Tunisians, and other Easterns, all eager to place their swords in the service of the Sultan. But mostly were Europeans, men of good names and repute who had already fought in other campaigns, and notably in the long Carlist wars of Spain. There was a French café in Pera High Street which was the gathering ground of all these free lances. It was kept by a genial citizen of Montmartre —himself an exile by reason of the part he had taken in the Paris Commune only four years before—who welcomed all the joyous, turbulent band as brothers of the heart.

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Some of his clients are even to-day famous. Take for instance M. Camille Barrère, who is France's Ambassador in Rome. There is a story of M. Barrère which is worth recalling :—

For some reason—I do not remember the precise cause—he became involved in litigation before the French Consular Court with an A.D.C. to the Sultan who was at the same time Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Marine. This gentleman, an Armenian, had held many offices under the Porte, and had at one time been Under-Secretary for War. He appeared before the tribunal garbed in all the gorgeous panoply of office, epaulettes, gold-striped trousers, gilt spurs and the rest, together with a magnificent ivory-hilted sword. At one moment of the proceedings a remark made by Barrère brought him to his feet.

" Gentlemen," he said to the Court in dignified protest, " I have been a soldier and I have been a sailor," and probably would have proceeded with his disclaimer . . . But the alert Barrère seized his opportunity on the uptake.

" M. le président," he said, " in all history there is but one mention of an Armenian who was a sailor, and he was so indifferent a navigator that he ran his ark aground on a mountain."

There were witty Frenchmen in Pera at that time. One, I will not give his name, had an intrigue with the very beautiful wife of a Levantine millionaire. I happened to be journeying on a Bosphorus steamer going from Therapia to Stamboul in the company of the husband of the lady and the wicked delinquent. I must suppose that the feelings of the offended husband became too much for him, for suddenly in presence of all the company he rose and slapped —— in the face.

Everyone expected a row. Pistols, knives, daggers—what you will.

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But nothing of the kind occurred.

The wicked man merely turned with a bland smile to the expectant crowd.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a shrug, "Je l'ai merité."

And the incident was closed.

Not all our adventurers were small fry. Among them were big figures in European society. Colonel Valentine Baker, for instance, of the 10th Hussars, who had known tragedy at home, came out in '76 to offer his sword to the Sultan, and being appointed Commander-in-Chief of Turkey's Corps of Gendarmerie, was followed by a number of great fighting officers of the British Army. There was Charles Baker, V.C., who had gained that honour in the Indian Mutiny; there was the gallant Colonel Briscoe of the 9th Lancers; there was Borthwick, brother to Lord Glenesk of the *Morning Post*; and many others whose names do not now recur to me. Of Colonel Borthwick, however, there is at least one good story that I must tell.

At the moment the gods were not good to Borthwick Bey, and his requirements had somewhat notoriously exceeded his credit, so that there was perhaps some excuse for the comment made by a member of the English Club on the announcement that the Sultan had honoured the Colonel with a decoration.

"Oh yes," was the remark, "of course he has got the order of the 'owes money 'ere.'" (Osmanieh.)

Valentine Baker, of whom I shall have more to tell later on, fell desperately ill immediately after his arrival in the Turkish capital, after a year of service on the Lom. It must be recalled that he had come straight to Stamboul from Holloway Gaol, where he had suffered a year's imprisonment, and had had a strenuous time in the Balkans. My mother, my father, and myself were at the time quartered in the world-famed Petala's Hotel at Therapia

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on the Bosphorus, the delightful resort where nearly all the Foreign Embassies have their summer palaces.

During the long weeks of the Colonel's illness, it was my privilege to watch almost nightly by his bedside in turn with his devoted wife and Lady Kemball, wife of Sir Arnold Kemball, who with Sir Herbert Chermside afterwards carried out the survey of the newly devised province of Kurdistan.

Of all these peripatetic warriors one or two at least remained in the Sultan's service until the end of their lives. There was this to be said about the Sublime Porte in those days. If a man held office under the Sultan and was careful to concern himself with nothing but the drawing of his salary, the Turkish Government respected his sincerity and left him alone. The only objection taken to a foreign official was made when he tried to do some work for his pay. Colonel Briscoe, long after the disappearance of Valentine Baker and his Gendarmerie Corps, lived a life of pleasant luxury and complete idleness in Aleppo, where, immune from all interference, he used to boast in his last years that as a reformed character he had brought himself down to three bottles of whisky a day. Briscoe (he has not been dead so many years) lived respected, and owing maybe to the whisky escaped the dread Aleppo button, which is the scourge of that province of Turkey, as it is also of Baghdad. Among the unforgettable figures of those memorable Constantinople days was Hobart Pasha. Hobart had been a gallant figure in the British Navy. He had also become considerably notorious as a gun-runner for the South in the Great American War. A charming man, with perfect courage and the most delicious manners, he was *persona grata* both in St. James's and at the Sultan's Palace. He was one of the men whom the late King Edward, as Prince of Wales, admitted to his friendship and whom the Sultan of Turkey delighted

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to honour. And he was the frankest man in the world.

"My dear boy," he used to say, "I know I am a humbug, but I am a clever humbug. His Majesty here at the Palace believes that I am an intimate at Marlborough House; I do not suppose for a moment that the Prince thinks I am a power at the Porte, but it serves my turn all the time. When I want to go to England for a holiday, the *Malieh* is called upon to hand me out £5,000 for my expenses, and when I come back to Turkey after my few months' leave I am able to exhibit at Dolma Bagtché Palace some gift, an ebony stick, say, with a gold mount, presented to me by the Prince of Wales and duly chronicled in the Press."

Hobart Pasha was one of Turkey's most able naval officers. His chief merit was, as himself frankly admitted, that he never did anything from one year's end to the other but draw his screw and his generous allowances from his Turkish employers. He had a delightful yacht at his disposal in which he used to sail the sunny waters of the Ægean and adjacent seas. He had several charming houses in Constantinople and on the Bosphorus, where he entertained a constant stream of distinguished visitors, and he admitted to his intimates that he was "a glorious fraud."

But the Sultan believed in him and that did it.

Hobart Pasha thoroughly understood the people with whom he had to deal. In the English Club in Pera he used to tell delightedly stories of Turkish naval enterprise. The Turks, it has to be acknowledged, are not a maritime people. They had never excelled at sea even in the days when their piracy brought the whole of Europe's sea-ravaged nations out against them. Torghut Barbarossa, who ravaged the Mediterranean shores for years and was the pirate Sultan of the Orient in Treaty peace with the Caliph at Constantinople, was not a Turk.

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He was an Albanian Christian, just as every other man who has made good in Turkey in the past 400 years has not been a descendant of the Ottomans.

But this is by the way.

One of Hobart's stories was of the Turkish naval officer who was called upon to take his gunboat to Malta for some needful repairs which could not be effected in the shipyards of the Golden Horn. He set forth—a valiant man and steadfast—and by God's grace got through the Dardanelles in safety. But thence on he was perplexed, and as in duty bound took study of his charts. These had been so long folded up in their metal cases that the folds had become frayed. Conscientiously, however, he wafered the broken pieces together. With the result that the middle piece got one end and the top and bottom portions found themselves where they did not rightly belong. On this guidance he sailed the seas.

Hobart used to tell joyously how that misbegotten warship trailed around the Mediterranean coast like an earwig in a flower pot, bumping here and there at a coast town and getting pushed off, until the gallant commander, his coal gone, his stores exhausted, had burned up his decks and cabin fittings in order to keep the vessel afloat.

And then, after months of stress, he one day found himself at a place he recognized as the entrance to the Dardanelles. He crept through, and, more by good luck than good guidance, struggled past the Straits and the "Narrows" and floated down the bright blue Marmora until at length he found himself once more in "home waters," at his anchorage by Seraglio Point.

"Whereupon," said Hobart, with a chuckle, "he put on his best uniform—epaulettes, long boots, and gilt spurs—and went ashore to report at the Admiralty. He was welcomed by the Minister of Marine, who displayed a

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sympathetic generosity in regard to his adventures." But our Commander was just a bluff seaman, an earnest, hard-bitten servant of His Majesty, with no flowers of speech in his vocabulary.

"Malta Yok." "There is no Malta," was the sum of his report.

And if you will believe me, it was accepted as adequate, and he was made Under-Secretary of the Admiralty the following week.

Of course, Hobart, a very energetic and brilliant man, had a good deal of trouble in his dealings with the Turkish Admiralty.

On one occasion, I recall, it was his lot to entertain some travelling foreign Prince, heir to the throne of a northern kingdom, who took a deep interest in naval matters and was anxious to study the merits of the crews of the Turkish fleet.

It was by good fortune that His Highness's visit took place at a time before Hassan Pasha, the Minister of Marine, had sold all the engines out of Turkey's battleships to an armament firm, dividing the resultant spoils with his Imperial master. But even so the state of the Ottoman Navy was not calculated to make Turkey respected at sea. The old *Mehmedieh* and the *Erthogruhl* and the other battleships could still make sufficient steam to dribble up and down the placid waters of the Marmora. That was all right, but when it came to "gun practice" a difficulty arose.

The crews indeed developed signs of mutiny. For years they had kept their clothes in those guns, and they thought it an outrage that they should clear out their wardrobes for the mere pleasure of a foreign Prince.

In those pre- and mid- and post-war days, Constantinople was flooded with visitors, distinguished or notorious, from practically all the countries of the earth. The tall

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figure of the then Marquess of Bath would be seen stalking —an immense, lanky, stooping frame—through Pera High Street. One met in the Grand Bazaar in Stamboul the then Duke of Sutherland, spending extravagant sums on antiques in the Bezestine. He was the English noble who threw away so much money in baksheesh in prolonged endeavours to procure from the Porte the concession for the construction of the Baghdad Railway, which much later was captured by the Kaiser and the Deutche Bank. Then there were Lady Strangford, who ran an admirable hospital in Bulgaria throughout the war; Mr. Burdett Coutts (his name was then Bartlett), who was distributing relief and rebuilding Bulgarian villages on behalf of the Baroness, whose secretary he was at the time. Sir John Pender and Sir James Anderson, both of telegraphic fame, were also visitors in their yachts, with many others of the élite of the London world. And also there were gathered a small army of correspondents of all nationalities. Among the British were George Henty of the *Standard*, Archibald Forbes of the *Daily News*, Gallenga of *The Times*, and John Drew Gay of the *Daily Telegraph*, together with Melton Prior of the *Illustrated London News* and Fred Villiers of the *Graphic*—all famous figures in the old world of war journalists. David Christie Murray, the novelist, was also an arrival. It was his first and only campaign. He came out as representative of a journal called the *Hour*, a sheet whose existence did not by much belie its name. For it failed and left poor Murray stranded and without a pennypiece in alien Pera. Edmund O'Donovan (the man who later went to the Merv Oasis) and Schuver, the wealthy, enterprising, eccentric traveller, frequently turned up for a few days' rest from one of their wild expeditions into that part of the interior that was at the moment the scene of most disturbance. They were firm chums, these two, and whenever possible hunted in

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couples. As fate would have it, both were killed in 1888 in the Sudan, within a hundred miles of each other: O'Donovan with Hicks Pasha at El Rahat, and Schuver in the Dinka country in the Bahr-al-Ghazal.

One of the most interesting among these peripatetic sojourners was the famous Colonel Fred Burnaby, at the time a very popular figure in London society. His great height—he stood 6 feet 4½ inches in his socks—and powerful physique were in all men's mouths.

The tale of his carrying a small pony under each arm up a difficult stairway at Albany Street Barracks had recently drawn special attention to him. He came out to Turkey—*en route* for St. Petersburg—chiefly to visit Valentine Baker—they were great friends—and it was while in the Sultan's capital that he finally elaborated the scheme that resulted in his famous ride to Khiva. Incidentally I may mention that I accompanied him before his start on the great adventure on many rides forty or fifty miles out into Asia Minor. Later on, in the Sudan, both in the Osman Digna fighting and up the Nile, I saw a great deal of him, right down to the time of his death at Abu Klea.

Burnaby was an extraordinary man. Despite all his advantages of powerful frame and military training, he was, I must think, the most unsoldierly soldier, so far as appearance and bearing went, that I have ever known.

His complexion was a sickly fish belly white, which was made even more conspicuous by the tiny dead black moustache he wore. I never saw him in the magnificent panoply of the " Blues " full dress, but in " civies " he was slovenly to grotesqueness. It was before the days of khaki —that might have suited him; but to see him go into action as I did at Baker's Teb was disheartening. On that eventful day (he was unattached and merely Baker's guest) he went forth to battle clothed in an old blue

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yachting suit, with two soiled dress ties knotted below his knees—navvy fashion—and with his neck wrapped in a black silk muffler. A broad-brimmed pith hat, green-lined, with the chin strap worn as gunners do, and a straight, double-edged, dervish sword in a red leather sheath completed the picture. He made no effort to vary this costume, when three weeks later the British expedition, under Sir Gerald Graham, came out and we fought and of course won the second battle of Teb.

It was said at the time that Burnaby suffered from a heart affection that sooner or later must be fatal, that he knew that at any moment a hurried movement, such as crossing Piccadilly in front of a cab, might cause his instant death, and that this being so he preferred to die as a soldier. How far this was true I cannot say, but certainly his horrible corpse-like complexion gave colour to the story, as also did his utter recklessness in fight.

At our British Teb (February 29, 1884), when Commander Arthur Knivett Wilson (he died as Admiral after his retirement) won his V.C., Burnaby merited the glorious Cross equally with the gallant Captain of the *Hecla*. At the time I was but a yard or two away, on horseback beside Valentine Baker, and we both witnessed the whole incident. It was this way. The gallant Fuzzy-Wuzzies had massed themselves in considerable force on the mound we were attacking for a desperate charge. They were the better able to do this because some huge sugar boilers, each 70 to 80 feet long, that lay half-way up the slope, afforded them ample cover.

Suddenly, with the wild, strange screams that these tribesmen use in warfare, they dashed down upon us, and by sheer weight of impact bent in our front line, not far indeed, but enough for what followed. Then—the whole episode occupied but a moment—a few of Wilson's men found themselves surrounded by a mob of frenzied Haden-

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dowa. Their commander dashed to their aid, and most of them, wounded, got back to the line. One man, however—a marine, I think—was dazed as well as hurt, and in bad case. Wilson, his sword broken, boxed with the hilt and with his empty revolver, till a Fuzzy got in a sword-cut at his bare head that sliced a great flap of scalp almost to the ear, leaving it hanging. In another instant he must have been finished, but by now Burnaby had reached him. The Colonel on this occasion had armed himself with a shot-gun which he clutched, and though the stock soon shattered, the bent barrels used as a flail—with his vast strength behind them—quickly cleared a broad lane and he managed to help both wounded men back to us.

A terrific fuss was made in Parliament about that shot-gun. The employ of such a weapon was debated as fiercely as was that matter of our Solingen bayonets, that had a trick of corkscrewing when in contact with a tough Arab body. Burnaby's own contention was that if you were out to kill men it made no difference whether you used a rifle or a squirt. The flame squirts of the Great War surely support his morality. But the Government chose to be shocked. Also he was not popular at Headquarters. Anyhow, he received no recognition.

It was at Abu Klea, eleven months later, that Burnaby met the fate that we believed he sought, on the 17th of January, 1885. Abu Klea was the spot where our desert column first came in contact with a powerful dervish force detached by the Khalifa Abdullahi (he was the Mahdi's chief General) from the hordes some 300,000 strong that held Khartoum closely invested, and doomed to fall nine days later. The weariness of the sands and rocks of the Bayuda Desert had been overcome, and here was the heavy scrub country, welcome because it indicated the nearness of the Nile. It was the usual thorny scrub, some years dwarf and others growing to above the height of a camel's

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upstretched head (when I last saw the place in 1898 it was almost bare), and intersected with narrow zig-zagging sandy lanes.

It was still early when the dervishes, invisible till now, opened fire from the bush, and our pickets, dismounted, came hurrying in, with dervishes both mounted and afoot close after them. A few of the hindmost were hotly pressed, and Burnaby, quick to see their peril, made to help them. The nearest pursuing dervish was a mounted sheikh wearing a quilted coat (under which probably was a shirt of mail—we have found many thus equipped after each Sudan fight—and armed, *entre autres*, with a 14-foot lotus spear. Burnaby, galloping out from the zareeba, dashed past the running guardsmen to gain them time by tackling this horseman. He was completely successful. With one stroke of his sabre he lopped off the broad lotus blade of the spear, and played with the man while the sheikh made to pull his sword from beneath his knee, prodding him gently with the point. It was child's play to the Colonel of the Blues, and who shall say what was in his mind? No doubt he knew nothing of the shirt of mail beneath the coat, but probably he was loath to slay an enemy whom he had disarmed.

And then, of a sudden—and it shows how swiftly these desert fighters could grasp a situation—two running Ansari flew to save their sheikh. One of them speared Burnaby in the neck, cutting the jugular vein, and while the other stabbed his horse in the belly, the sheikh, his sword free, cut him across the forehead. The horse sank to the ground, and the gallant Colonel, though he regained his feet, was now blinded by his blood and could but slash aimlessly around him. A sergeant of the Blues got to him in time, some said, to clasp his hand, but by now a little cloud of Arabs was around them, and the two died together.

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Ah, well! it is an old story now, and no doubt long since forgotten.

* * * * *

As I have said, Burnaby and Valentine Baker were close friends; it is thus fitting that I should end this chapter with a story of the brave old ex-Colonel of the 10th Hussars. Baker was terribly dejected and bitterly chagrined by his failure at Teb of the 4th of February, and the utter annihilation of the scratch force that had been given him as fighting material. Thus he sought, and was of course accorded, by Sir Gerald Graham, permission to take part in the British operations, as a guest.

His old regiment was there, commanded by Colonel Wood, with Lord Airlie as Adjutant and Brabazon (Beauty Brab) as Major. All of them had served under him, and certainly would have resented his exclusion.

Very soon after the Knivett–Wilson–Burnaby incident, which I have described, I was still chatting with Colonel Baker, when a shell chanced to burst over us. A fragment caught my horse on the buttocks, and it took me a moment or two to get the poor beast under control. Then I noticed that Baker had his white-gloved hand to his cheek, which was bleeding profusely. I have always made it a practice, whenever possible, to carry a small clean towel in my holster in an antiseptic wrapping. So I pulled it out and passed it to the old gentleman. He was over sixty-two and elderly for his years.

He was childishly grateful. A few minutes later there was a lull in the fight, and I begged my wounded friend to come with me to a little shelter behind some baggage mules where Surgeon-Major Briggs had established a dressing station.

For a long time the Pasha obstinately refused. Oh! it was a mere nothing, a scratch—he was quite all right—my persistence was irritating; and when at length I

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prevailed and got him to Briggs, nothing could persuade him to dismount, and the doctor, standing on a "medical comforts" chest, had to strap him up, as best he could, while I kept the horse steady.

Well, it was a longish fight, and a terribly hot day, and when now and again I chanced to see Baker, I found him each time greyer and more drooping in the saddle.

At last all was over near sundown, and riding up to Sir Gerald Graham to congratulate him, and to ask a few questions for my *Times* article (one cannot see everything), I found myself in a little group composed of Sir Gerald, Colonel Wood, Father Brindle, Burnaby (who had now got a bullet in the shoulder), and Admiral Sir William Hewitt, whose nickname in the navy of "Bloody Bill" he had gained through a certain strenuousness of diction.

Sir William Hewitt had been specially prohibited from Whitehall from taking any part in the shore operations. Preferably he was to remain on his flagship *Euryalus*, which now lay off Suakin. But, of course, B—— Bill had to be in it. I had seen him several times during the day, very ill at ease (for he was a shocking horseman) with Lieutenant Levison, his secretary, holding one knee and a petty officer the other, and the Admiral himself using frightful language in a voice that transcended the guns.

When I entered this charmed circle an argument was in progress. Everyone was persuading Valentine Baker to ride back to the coast—it was but seven miles—and get a night's rest on board the *Sphinx* (the Admiral's yacht).

"I should do it, Val, old man," said Burnaby, and the others endorsed the sentiment, until at length the poor, weary, pain-racked Pasha assented.

"If you'll come too, Fred," he said, "I'll accept."

Then Sir William Hewitt turned to me.

"Now look here, young *Times* Scudamore," he cried.

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"I am carrying the dispatches to the Suakim telegraph station, and I shall not start before to-morrow morning. You look as though you wanted a bath and a dinner." (It was quite true.) "Come along with us. We'll give you all you want, and then you can write all night and do us all justice."

C'était pas à refuser. I filled the bill.

Next morning, I was just finishing my work at about 6.15, when I heard myself called. It was the Admiral speaking down through the wardroom skylight from the deck. "You've another ten minutes, young man."

"Thank you, sir, I'm through."

"Right! Now look here, Scudie, I am not a rigid censor, but if you've said anything about me—— "

"Nothing but what is nice, sir. Why?"

"Well, a little bird tells me that my language yesterday was a little forcible. Of course, it was that damned horse. But anyhow, I am being paid out for my sins. I haven't an inch of skin on the insides of my legs, from the ankles to the crutch."

I had packed up when Burnaby, looking more corpse-like than ever and very shaky, entered the wardroom, his arm strapped to his breast.

"Look here," he said, "of course you've told the story, so you had best finish it. This is what they have just taken out of poor Valentine's face."

He held out a big lump of lead. It had pierced the Pasha's cheek, broken his palate, and had lain there.

Poor Valentine Baker! his troubles continued and increased from that time on. His wife, a very wealthy woman, had stuck to him magnificently throughout the catastrophe that wrecked his career, had followed him out to Turkey, and had joined him in Egypt when he had escaped—literally escaped from Constantinople to take up the task of reorganizing the Egyptian Army, of which

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he was deprived by the direct veto of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. To his wife and to his two daughters—he had no son—Baker was absolutely devoted. The elder, however, a pretty, charming girl of twenty, had the poorest health. Almost it might be said she was a permanent invalid. Towards the end of 1884 she fell a victim to enteric fever and was practically doomed from the first. She died in Cairo. To divert her mother and sister from their grief, the Pasha chartered a dahabeeyah and carried his family up the Nile to Assouan. And thither fate again pursued him. Mrs. Baker was taken ill and died in two days.

I only once saw Baker after that time. Rather more than a year later I met him in Pall Mall—a broken man. He made an allusion to his lost ones and to my last meeting with them. But the effort was too much for him, and pressing my hand he hurried away, the tears in his eyes.

He died soon afterwards.

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CHAPTER V

ALEXANDRIA AND THE MEHEMET ALI SQUARE

Hashish dens and native frequenters. The Mehemet Ali Square. I mistake the outbreak for a marriage feast and pursue my way. The mob breaks through. The spoils of loot. A sprint for life. I find refuge. The authorities do not seek to stem the bloodshed. Quiet restored. Identifying the dead.

IT WAS AFTERNOON on Sunday, June 11, 1882, and I was seated in the glass-roofed hall in the Hôtel Abbat, in Alexandria. For the reasons that it was Sunday, and that the summer heat was at its height, the hotel was wellnigh empty, and only two or three persons were sipping their coffee at the little tables around me. The town at the time was in a state of perfect tranquility to all appearances—so peaceful, indeed, that late on the previous night I had been taken by my Arabic master on a tour of inspection of the hashish and opium-smoking dens that formed numerous ugly blots on the ugliest and lowest native quarter of the Arab town. This quarter was thronged on that Saturday night by such a crowd of persons, large numbers of them strangers to the town, and many more bedouins from the desert, as my hodja declared he had never before seen gathered within the walls of Skenderieh. But it was a good-natured mob and an orderly—if, that is, orderliness can be associated with the frenzied, epileptic contortions of the zikka (a sacred native dance); with the maniacal laughter and agonized sobs of

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the hashashat, overcome by the fatal drug ; or by the songs and loud talk and boisterous jokes of those devotees as yet only at their second or third pipes. In the light of the morrow's events, this orderliness and the kindly welcome everywhere accorded me, and the general atmosphere of good humour and hospitality, were something more than remarkable, and showed very clearly the absolute power over the fellaheen and the army that lay in the hands of Arabi, the uncrowned master of the country. For these were the men charged with the execution of the orders of that master, namely, the massacre of the European population of the great seaport town.

It was just on half-past two, I remember, when, as I sat nearly dozing in the heat beside my empty coffee-cup in the Abbatt lounge, the sound of distant firing came to me across the quiet city, and I rose and wandered idly out into the great Mehemet Ali Square, which then, as now, was one of Alexandria's chief glories. It was the hour of the siesta, when even the shops were everywhere closed, and, save for one or two sentries sheltering beneath the trees, the *Place* was wholly deserted. The blazing sun poured down upon the deserted, blistered bandstand, and upon the many empty tables and chairs ranged round it, and in front of the shuttered booths of the ice-sellers and fruiterers. The huge statue of mighty Mehemet Ali seemed to glow with fiery heat, and him apart, all other objects were of a dazzling whiteness that seared the eyes. The noise of firing seemed to come from a street lying at right angles to the centre of the square, and known, from an old convent there, as the Sikka Sabah Benat (the street of the seven sisters), and as I approached it, I could hear, blent with the reports of firearms, a kind of confused roar and murmur that, drawing nearer, resolved itself into the fierce yells and shouts and the shrieks of a fighting multitude. Inasmuch, however, as in those days shouting and

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uproar, and the firing of guns and pistols, and the blatant discords of native instruments, were common sounds in the Arab quarters of the town, heralding, as a rule, a marriage or a circumcision procession, I attached no special importance to the growing tumult, although a sentry of whom I made inquiry told me gruffly, but civilly, that "the matter was no concern of his, or mine," and enjoined me to get back to my house at once. Possibly I might have followed his advice had the opportunity to do so been accorded me; but even as he spoke, and so quickly that I was unable to grasp what was happening, the whole square seemed to become filled with people. Blue-gowned fellaheen, brandishing heavy ironwood clubs; bedouin from the desert, in coarse white-hooded cloaks of camels' hair, armed with long brass-bound guns; butchers and slaughterers, with bare, blood-stained arms and breasts, and with reeking cleavers in their hands; semi-nude and grimy coal-porters from the docks; and a host of others, the scum of the native quarters, had invaded the square from half a dozen side streets in less time than it needs to write this sentence. All were yelling threats against the Christians; all, or nearly all, were in a frenzy of murderous intoxication from the fumes of the drug with which they had been plied throughout the night and forenoon; numbers of them carried the spoil of their successful pillage of the shops along the route they had followed. I had but little time in which to grasp details, but I recall one fellow who sought to bear with him as he ran an immense pile of straw hats, worthless things, one would think, and wholly unprofitable; two others, bedouin, these dragged between them a great bale of silks and velvets and rolls of ribbon, several of which had fallen, and were making an ever-lengthening trail of bright colours in the dust; a fourth bore a stock of musical instruments: mandolines, violins, and guitars, around

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which he had wound his long cummerbund to keep them together. Others, to be sure, had sought more useful plunder. I noted great silver candelabra in one fellow's hands ; a couple of big claret jugs of the same metal, and a handful of watches dangling, grabbed by their chains, were a dock-labourer's spoils from some silversmith's window. But the majority seemed to have sought bulk as their quarry, as a child might take the larger and less precious of a handful of coins. There was, as I have said, but little time to observe, for no sooner had the mob burst upon the square than the unarmed among them, and they were many, made a dash at the band pavilion and the cafés, and began to break up the music-stands, the railings, the chairs, and the frames of the little marble-topped tables, and to improvise weapons out of these rough but effective materials. The sentry who had spoken to me sought in a dazed and quite futile manner to check those yelling brigands nearest to him ; but he was brushed aside in a moment, and hustled into the throng, and was seen no more. And then came my turn. I had stood still, in bewildered surprise—the time was only half a minute—and was only dimly realizing that this was a rising against the Europeans, when the time came for me to act, and act promptly. A brawny fellow, bare-armed and wild-eyed, yelling incoherences, and slavering foam while he yelled, wrestled with a table frame a few yards away from me, and I watched stupidly while he broke the fabric into halves with his hands and knees. And then he saw me, and, quick as thought, hurled one portion of the jagged timbers at me. The awkward missile struck me on the knee and brought me to the ground, and, ere I could fully recover myself, the ruffian was at me with the other half. Even had I been armed I should have been practically helpless ; but, as luck would have it, chance served infinitely better than I could have served myself. As he struck

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at me I fell or staggered against him, with the result that the blow, which would have cracked my skull like an egg-shell, fell on my right shoulder and upper arm, ripping open both clothing and flesh for a distance of some 8 inches. Probably this missing of his mark, coupled with his obvious drunkenness, momentarily destroyed my opponent's equilibrium, and before he could make another blow at me I was off, and not a moment too soon, for others had seen me, and followed with him in hot pursuit. It was, I will admit, a good race, though the finish was closer than I could have wished. I ran for all I was worth, and have little doubt that had my pursuers been sober I could not have escaped. But the drunkenness and the mad lust for blood of my opponent with the table frame proved my salvation and his undoing. All round the Mehemet Ali Square runs a post and chain railing, and beyond that is a broad pavement. This I kept in mind, and, reaching it, cleared the whole at a bound, landing well out in the road. Not so my pursuer. He had no thought or eyes but for the escaping *Giaour*. He fouled the railing with both shins, and came as complete and paralytic a "cropper" as has ever been recorded. I looked back for a moment, as I sprinted across the road and down the street opposite, and saw that his head was split open like a rotten orange, and that one Arab at least was unlikely to give further trouble.

The street along which I now fled ran past a church and down to the sea. Near the church was another sentry, who shouted to me to stop, and indeed made an effort to seize me. Fortunately, however, I was out of sympathy with Egyptians for the moment, and I eluded him and ran on. Towards the lower end of this street were a number of shops tenanted by Greeks, Maltese, and Italians, whose families lived in the upper parts of the houses. These gentlemen had early realized what was taking place, and

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had assembled in a double line forming a cordon across the road. They were all well armed, and determined to defend their property and their homes. As I neared them, very closely followed by some half-dozen of the rioters, a few ran forward to meet me and helped me through their lines, while the rest prepared for business. The first three Arabs, dashing blindly forward, were instantly killed, and the rest turned tail, but of them only one escaped, the other two being shot before they had run 20 yards. No more of the ardent seekers after Christian blood ventured down that road during the day. Egyptian sentries, even in those days, had their uses, and the guard by the church warned all venturesome compatriots that the street was no place for an honest Moslem.

I had no further thrilling experiences during that day, though the events of the afternoon and evening were quite sufficiently exciting. My newly found friends bound up my smarting shoulder and restored me with cordials, and then together we patrolled that and adjoining streets in a body, making sallies now and again, hither and thither, to the assistance of beleaguered shopkeepers. The rioting and the murders continued until near to sundown; very many shops were broken into and looted, their owners being, in several cases, found dead behind their own counters. A considerable number, probably 200, of Europeans were murdered; but events moved so quickly during the days that immediately followed that the figures were never accurately known. Not the least of the horrors of that afternoon's work lay in the fact that in several cases fugitives from the murderers were invited to take refuge in the *caracols*, or guard-houses, equivalent to our police stations, and, once inside the walls, were beaten to death by the clubbed rifles of their entertainers. Three young Englishmen who had

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strolled into the Mehemet Ali Square as I had done were caught there, and subsequently we found their bodies so mashed into a pulp that we could only recognize them by their clothing. An English clergyman and his daughter were slaughtered and horribly disfigured in the Sikka Sabah Benat. The British Consul, who sought to stay the havoc by his personal influence, was set upon and badly wounded, narrowly escaping with his life. And all this time the authorities did nothing to quell the disturbances. There was a large force of troops in the town, some 15,000 strong; but by orders of the Governor these men were closely confined to barracks, not, as might be supposed, because of any fear lest they should side with the insurgents—no attempt, indeed, was ever made to put forward such a plea—but because the Governor declared himself powerless to act until he should have received orders from Cairo. Here, in fact, was the cause of the position. The army swore by Arabi Pasha; but Arabi Pasha had, at the instance of the foreign Consuls-General, been dismissed from his post as Minister of War. No one had been appointed in his place, and, as his own action clearly showed, the massacre was organized with the sole purpose of procuring his immediate reinstatement. The chiefs of the army in Cairo refused to act without the authority of the fallen Minister, who, when appealed to by the Khedive and his advisers, declined to take any action save in his old capacity as chief of the army. Thus the afternoon wore on, and the slaughter continued in Alexandria, until at length the Khedive and his advisers restored to Arabi his portfolio. Immediately on the accomplishment of his purpose, the War Minister acted. The wires flashed a message to Alexandria; battalion after battalion of troops were marched out of the barracks and through the streets of the panic-stricken town without the need to strike a blow of any kind, for before the

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advances of the patrolling soldiery the rioters, still carrying their booty, dispersed quietly to their homes and hiding-places, not as men fleeing before wrath merited, but rather as decent workmen who had knocked off from honest labour at the ringing of the accustomed bell. So quickly quiet did the streets become, that by eight o'clock in the evening we were able, by little groups of three and four, to make the round of the Consulates, and the hospitals, and even of the *caracols*, and to search there for the bodies of our friends—a gruesome task that occupied us until well into the dawn of the next day.

* * * * *

That Sunday's work was undoubtedly a triumph, albeit a very fleeting one for Arabi, and for the high personages who abetted him ; but it is probable that if he could have guessed how he was playing into the hands of this country, he would gladly have forgone even the greater success that he then fondly anticipated.

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CHAPTER VI

EGYPT AND ARABI PASHA

1881. The difficulties between England and France. Tewfik Pasha. Ismail's wives. The fellaheen girl. Ismail tries to alter once again the law of succession. Europe intervenes.

IN EGYPT, 1881 was a worrying and distressful year. The long outstanding differences between France and England had created an impossible condition for all Europeans resident in the country ruled by the Khedive. The chief of the State himself had only just been acknowledged in his position and that by an accident. Few people to-day probably recall the way in which the youthful Tewfik Pasha came to the throne.

The story is one of the quaintest in the peripacy of dynastic developments. Ismail Pasha, Khedive and grandson of the great Mahomed Ali, first absolute satrap of Egypt, desired to subvert the Mahomedan law of succession and gain the right of having as his own successor a member of his immediate family.

To achieve this end he spent nine million pounds in bribes in Constantinople and finally obtained the *Fetvah* of the Porte. But that gained, he found himself confronted by the resistance of France and England, who at that time were the controllers of Egypt.

Ismail was in a strange position. He had married two wives, cousins, Princesses of his own house, but neither of them had given him an heir.

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And then one day, looking from the window of his Palace of Koubeh, he was attracted by the beauty of a fellaha girl who was carrying a shoulder-load of wood to the bath across the courtyard. That peasant girl was taken into the harem and lay with the Khedive for at least one night.

After this, in accordance with Eastern patriarchal custom she was maintained as a Princess in the harem, and she bore her master a son, by which fact she became his chief Sultana and her boy his heir. I believe that after that first day Ismail never again saw his peasant wife, and it is certainly true that until the morning in 1878, when the Sultan from Constantinople commanded his abdication, he had never willingly looked upon Tewfik Pasha, his successor. Both of his wives (the Princesses of his house) had borne him sons not long after Tewfik's birth, and his extravagant expenditure at Constantinople was made with the thought of placing one or other of them on the throne at will. It was then that Europe intervened. "You have gained," it was decreed, "the right of direct succession for the family of Mahomed Ali, but your successor must be your first-born heir. We will no longer tolerate your Egyptian practice of murdering all other aspirants to the throne." Thus it was that when Tewfik, lumbering, slow-limbed, and peasant-voiced, appeared before his father to announce that he was now Khedive, old red-haired Ismail put out a vast fat hand to him and wished him success.

Ismail left the Palace immediately and the country. He took with him, it is on record, some sixty ladies of his household, a great store of money, in gold, and a vast collection of jewels. For a time he dwelt in his great house at Emirghian on the Bosphorus, but later ended his days in Geneva, which seems to be the chosen asylum of all exiled kings.

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Egypt was at this time a field of wild confusion. The interests of England and France were violently opposed—a fact which rendered absolutely nugatory the dual control that we were supposed to exercise over the Khedivial Realm.

Native agitators were quick to recognize the position, and a "peoples' party" agitator immediately came to the front. This was Arabi Pasha, a Colonel in the Egyptian Army who had been raised to the position of Minister of War.

There is no need in a mere volume of memories to pursue seriously the history of Arabi and his rebellion.

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CHAPTER VII

SIR EVELYN WOOD, FIRST SIRDAR

Genial digs at himself. His prowess as a writer. First Sirdar of Egyptian Army. His officers: Wingate, Grenfell, Kitchener, Rundle, Hunter, Smith-Dorrien, Chermside. The language difficulty. Sir Evelyn's disappointment, but loyal support of Wolseley. The whale boats. The Bab-el-Kebir and the "Nasty Fairy." A friend in need after Omdurman. Bouchier of *The Times*. Sir Evelyn's story of the eastern graveyard.

INNUMERABLE GOOD STORIES focus upon the genial and lovable personality of the late Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, and not a few of these—especially when they contained some sly dig at himself—were contributed by his own pen. For during the years of his retirement the great soldier was a prolific writer. He has not only given to the world nearly a dozen volumes packed with valuable and most interesting matter, but he also edited and contributed forewords and introductions to the works of many prominent authorities on military subjects. In the memoirs of the Field-Marshal's extraordinarily vivid career, however, far too little space has been devoted to his great record of creative and administrative service in Egypt. The fact that he was the first Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, as we know it to-day, deserves very much more than the brief comment it has received. At the present time, when our position has been completely upset by agitators, in the Land of the Pharaohs it is especially valuable to recall that the Egyptian Army—whose attitude in all the disturbances has been in every way exemplary—

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was modelled and organized by Sir Evelyn Wood, with under him a small band of devoted assistants, everyone of whom ultimately rose to high military distinction, while the names of not a few are to-day household words among us. First among these was of course Lord Kitchener, who undertook the task of organizing the new Egyptian cavalry —at the time non-existent—in January 1883, a few weeks only after Sir Evelyn had received the mandate to re-establish the Khedive's forces—dispersed and disbanded after Tel-el-Kebir. While among other recruits chosen by the new Sirdar, who have so amply justified his selection, were Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, Sir Reginald Wingate, Sir Archibald Hunter, Sir Herbert Chermside, and Sir Leslie Rundle—Kitchener's lifelong friend. There were more, but these are doubtless the most generally known, and between them they had to construct, establish, and organize a fighting army out of the most unpromising and heteroclyte materials. To add to their difficulties, it may be said that with the exception of Kitchener, who was already proficient, and Wingate—a linguist ingrain—none of them knew any Arabic. This indeed produced a curious anomaly in the earlier ceremonial parades of the new troops. There was a native Egyptian Brigadier, Schudi Pasha, who had been educated in Berlin, and it chanced that Lord Grenfell—then Major and Brigadier—knew some German. Thus Sir Evelyn had to give his orders, as Commander of the Forces, in the one language common to his two Brigadiers—i.e. German; Schudi afterwards giving his words in Arabic, Grenfell in English, and the four English commanders in Turkish —as was and is still the custom in the Egyptian Army.

About the same time Sir Evelyn discovered that the Code Napoléon—till then in force—did not, as put into Arabic, deal with some crimes common in the East, with the result that our Army Discipline Act of 1881, with the

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Khedive's name substituted for that of Her Majesty, became, in Arabic, the penal code.

It was matter of more than keen disappointment to Sir Evelyn that he was not permitted to play a greater part in what became the Tragedy of Khartoum. He was of opinion—and Kitchener shared his view—that had action, by his native material, been taken in time, General Gordon might have been brought away, though possibly against his own desire.

But Gordon—who had small opinion of the Egyptians—bitterly opposed their employment, and Lord Wolseley was always a somewhat jealous rival, with the result that in the unfortunate Nile Expedition Sir Evelyn's part was restricted to the charge of lines of communication, while—as one of his officers—Kitchener's great knowledge and peculiar gifts were only spasmodically utilized.

What was permitted to him, however, the first Sirdar carried through triumphantly. He had always deprecated the project of a procession of whale boats that should carry the British troops up the Nile, from the Second Cataract onward—a conception, by the way, reminiscent of the Red River expedition against Louis Riel. But in order to contribute to its success—which was alas! impossible—he laboured day and night with untiring devotion and extraordinary initiative, spending in continued effort the utmost energies of himself and of every man under him, British and native, and enlisting in the work the services of many thousands of tribesmen of the Nile provinces.

Of course, Father Nile was too strong for him—as he knew must prove, and before many months were out every jagged rock in the river between reaches was decorated with its broken whaler, while the banks were strewn for hundreds of miles with the flotsam and jetsam—impedimenta of wrecked Tommies.

He had, however, his triumphs and successes, and notable

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among them was the passage—by his agency—of a gunboat (it became a gunboat) up-stream through the "Bab-el-Kebir, or great gate of the impassable Second Cataract.

This achievement had been attempted before by Sir Samuel Baker, but with much smaller vessels. But Sir Evelyn Wood's triumph was never afterwards challenged, and remains to this day unique in Nile history.

For his purpose he obtained the services of a notable band of helpers. Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Sir Richard Poore, Sir Colin Keppell—afterwards Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons—and Commander Hammill, were among them as naval experts; while on land, Kitchener, Wingate, and Colonel Sir Philip Durham Trotter (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) were his chief assistants. For haulage he enrolled 8,000 Dongola tribesmen, who worked in parties 400 strong, each in charge of naval petty officers and ratings, and threw their energies at command on to many miles of 9-inch grass and 3-inch hemp hawsers.

There was but one day in the year—according to Koki, the Cataract Sheikh—when the enterprise might succeed, and that day was watched for with anxious hearts. It came—suddenly of course. For three days before I had walked with Sir Evelyn dryshod through the Bab-el-Kebir channel.

The arrangements were complete; operations began, and the steamer—*sans* engines, *sans* rudder or paddles, almost *sans* crew, save for five blue-jacket volunteers, and with Sir Richard Poore with a megaphone, perched aloft on a rickety superstructure—was with infinite labour hauled up-stream to the foot of the surging turbulent hill of foaming brown water, that was the Bab, where half the Nile was pouring down to Father Egypt.

And then, just as the most serious business was due to begin, loud yells, shouts and protests broke from the throats

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of the chief white assistants. A small figure was seen to be climbing along a great guy rope that led from the bank to the ship, which was by now standing on end.

It was Sir Evelyn Wood who had wished to make the passage in the ship and who had broken away from his dissuaders at the last moment. The enterprise was successful, and the Nassif-el-Kheir—or "Nasty Fairy," as our sailors called her—made the perilous passage in safety, though her sister ships were broken to matchwood in near following days.

This vessel, after Sir Evelyn's Nile triumph, survived long years of strange vicissitudes in the Khalifa's service, and in September 1898, when the fortunes of war had restored her to us, it was my privilege, with Bennet Burleigh, George Steevens, and other colleagues of the Press, to journey perilously on board her (a mere shell, her engines and paddles tied together with wires, and a dervish Reis commanding) down the Nile to railhead, after our fight at Omdurman.

I duly communicated this fact to Sir Evelyn Wood, and received the Field-Marshal's congratulations. The great little Field-Marshal was not only one of the most genial of men, but he was also filled with humanity and with appreciation of the ideas held by other people, no matter whom they might be. Of course, the misfortune of deafness which came upon him in comparative youth was a terrible handicap to advancement. At the time when I first met him his hearing had almost completely gone, and to hear the General and Commander Hammill—who was in the same case—discussing urgent strategic problems, each at the top of his voice, used sometimes to strike terror into Wingate and myself. I have only once known another such desperate case of deafness affecting two important personages who wished to exchange views on matters of European urgency. This was in Crete in 1897 during the

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Revolution, when Bouchier of *The Times* (one of the finest correspondents of modern history, and the only pressman in the world whose memory has been honoured by a country (Bulgaria) with a postage stamp bearing his portrait) used to bawl their secrets to each other on the deck of H.M.S. *Revenge*, what time we other correspondents —awaiting our interviews—strove to appear absolutely unconscious of the conversation. Sir Evelyn had a respect for all genuine beliefs, as the following story will show :—

We were riding together one moonlit night in the western desert alongside the Nile, and it chanced that our road lay across a tract of country intersected by villages, near by which spread cemeteries, far larger of course than the hamlets whose populace they harboured. A great drift of sand had been thrown up by a storm, and we needed to take a guide from one village to find us a passage through it for our camels. This man led us across a vast cemetery, where the white moon lit up the bricked graves, with beside the head of each a goolah—water-jar—and an earthen platter. A soldier of our escort was singing as we entered this field of the dead, and the guide turning begged for sllence—" Perhaps," he said, " they are asleep."

The General endorsed the recommendation, and turning to me told the following story :—

" In the Ashanti war," he said, " I was riding one night through just such a place as this, with broken shards, which had once held water and bread, beside every grave. My guide was a Fanti tribesman, intelligent and pious.

" ' What,' I asked him, ' is the meaning of these water-jars and bread-platters ?'

" ' Lord,' he replied, ' we place in them water and cakes for our lost ones.'

" ' But do your dead rise and eat foods of the living ? ' asked Sir Evelyn.

" The tribesman laughed. ' Of course not,' he said.

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'The birds and the sun consume the water—and the wild dogs and jackals the food.'

"'Then I cannot understand your purpose.'

"Again the Fanti laughed.

"'Your Excellency does not understand?' he said. 'The spirit of the dead eats the spirit of the bread and drinks the spirit of the water.'"

The General said that he thought this a religious belief of a very high order.

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CHAPTER VIII

OSMAN DIGNA

The story of the Hadendoa. Osman, a rich merchant and slave importer. Our gunboats capture his dhows and ruin him. He goes to Jeddah and returns to Suakin, but is cold-shouldered. He joins the Mahdi.

THE *Hadendoa*, re-christened *Fuzzy-Wuzzies* by Mr. Kipling, were an important and prosperous tribe in the Eastern Sudan. They peopled the sparsely cultivated lands stretching from the Red Sea littoral at Suakin to Ariab, the last oasis on the edge of the desert whose other boundary was Berber, and the Nile Valley. The Hadendoa were an ancient people of probably pure Arab descent, immigrants, doubtless, at the outset from the Hedjaz in some time of inter-tribal warfare. They were relatively prosperous, and, albeit, a race of notorious high courage, they were peaceable; despite the terrible exactions and extortion of the Egyptian tax-collectors, they were law-abiding; and for many years previous to the period of which I write they had enjoyed a deservedly high reputation for the honesty and the loyalty which marked all their dealings, both with their neighbours of the great Ababdeh tribe on the Berber and Nubian desert side, and with the European and native merchants of Suakin. Among other things, they were the carriers along the great Suakin-Berber-Khartoum trade route of all the goods—senna, ivory, feathers, gums, etc.—exports from the vast Sudan, and of the Manchester goods, the ammunition, the brass

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rods, blue cloth, and specie sent up in exchange from the coast town.

Barely a month before the time when the Hadendoa rose in rebellion there had been consigned to their care, by an English merchant in Suakin, for delivery to a French merchant in Khartoum, a sum of no less than £15,000—so vast a fortune, from the standpoint of native expenditure, that it would have maintained the whole tribe in gaudy affluence throughout several generations—and, be it said at once, the great consignment of silver dollars—6 to the £1—duly reached its destination.

The chief of the Hadendoa was a man of whom the world heard much during the next twenty years. He was named Osman Digna, or *Dagena* (the bearded). About twenty years ago, I noticed that an ingenious chronicler in a London newspaper set up a fanciful theory that Osman Digna was a Frenchman born in Rouen. This, as Euclid would have it, is absurd. As a matter of fact, however, the bearded Osman was not a full-blooded Hadendoa. He had in his veins a strain of Turkish ancestry, contracted from the union, some 150 years back, of a Turkish soldier, stranded fortuitously at Suakin while returning from the Mecca pilgrimage, with a Hadendoa tribeswoman. It is possible that this strain, faint though it was, contributed somewhat to give Osman that ascendancy over his own, and even other tribes, which he undoubtedly possessed.

In many respects he was a remarkable man, and certainly he was clever, and an able man of business. At one time during his career he had been Syndic of the Suakin merchants, but, like all Arab chieftains who possessed capital in those days, he was a dealer in slaves. His *coffles* used to come down from far Bahr-el-Ghazal, and from Kordofan, by the dread "Sikkat-el-Arbäeen," or "forty days road," each man in the chain a beast of burden bearing

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on his shoulders a couple of ivory tusks, or on his head a bale of merchandise, and himself to be sold into bondage, if he survived, at the journey's end.

At length, however, our gunboats in the Red Sea being particularly active in the suppression of the slave trade, misfortune befell Osman's ventures. One, and then another, and then a third of his dhows, freighted with stinking, starving humanity, packed sardine-like beneath decks, were captured by an alert Lieutenant-Commander of H.M. Navy, with the result that Osman found himself so crippled financially that he had to fly the town and his mayoralties. He sought relief, as better Moslems do, in a pilgrimage to Mecca; and after a time, in the pride of his newly acquired green turban, returned to Suakin, but was received there as an outcast, and treated with such contumely and insult that he fled inland to the strong places of his tribe, vowing that he would bring the walls and the coral-built houses of Suakin about the heads of those who had insulted him.

The opportunity fell to his hands almost at once. The year was 1883. There had arisen in Bahr-el-Ghazal a saint and preacher who had assumed the title of Mahdi, and under that title—the cruelties and exactions of Egyptian officials aiding—had prospered exceedingly, had rallied thousands to his standard, and by their aid had conquered each Government force sent against him. Him Osman visited, and it chanced that at the time of his visit the Mahdi's forces surrounded and annihilated that ill-fated Egyptian Army commanded by Major-General Hicks and his small band of English brother officers. This unparalleled triumph of the cause so fired Osman's ambitions that he offered his services as the Mahdi's lieutenant in the Eastern Sudan, pledging his own and affiliated tribes to the *Jehad*.

Needless to say, his offer was promptly accepted, and

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Osman, throwing off his chrysalis of bankruptcy and disgrace, emerged to the world at large as a full-blown Emir and leader of warriors in a holy cause. This much it has been needed to say to account for the rising in the Eastern Sudan in the autumn of 1883, and my presence in the battle, or massacre rather than battle, of El Teb, which I am about to describe.

The Hadendoa set about their rising after the manner customary with hill tribes. They refused to pay taxes, and murdered the tax-collectors; they murdered the British Vice-Consul who went out from Suakin to reason with them; they invested the town of Tokar, and besieged the garrison of Sinkat, and effectually blocked the trade route to Berber and the interior of the Sudan.

It was at this juncture—the news of the massacre of Hick's force had just filtered down to Cairo—that General Valentine Baker, who had recently raised the newly created force of gendarmerie in Egypt, was dispatched to Suakin to take command of the troops there and put down the rising in the hills. A British naval force, under Admiral Sir William Hewitt, was to co-operate with him, if might be. For a time it was hoped that the rebellious tribes might be brought back to their allegiance by means of persuasion and without serious bloodshed. And to this end overtures were made, both to the Hadendoa and their neighbours, and negotiations were entered into with the chiefs of tribes as yet not avowedly hostile. Religious influences were also brought to bear, and the Sheikh El Morghani, a saint, and one of a saintly family that had enjoyed a wide repute for holiness during upwards of 800 years, was sent out to Osman Digna's stronghold to urge upon the rebels a return to the ways of peace.

In those days, several times weekly, long strings of small, fierce, wild-eyed, delicate-limbed camels might be seen dashing at a hand trot through the scrub and across the

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stone causeway to the gates of the coral town of Suakin, bearing on their backs big, muscular, white-robed warriors, as wild-eyed and fierce-looking as the beasts they bestrode, each brandishing a sheaf of spears, and with his huge sword and hippopotamus hide shield slung from the saddle horn behind him, and each with his rough bristling mop of hair floating out in the wind, and topped by a great lump of glistening sheep's fat. Then long, useless conferences would be held, and gaudy red cloaks, with gold fringes and tassels, would be distributed to the chiefs, to whom also presents were made of sweets and of children's toys; and at sundown the long procession would file out again through the lines, the headmen grinning in their new finery, and carrying with the spears, the one a woolly lamb, and another a *polichinelle*, or a doll, or a menagerie, or some such inanity, but all with their minds wholly unaffected by the interview. Of course it was all of no avail. The garrison of Sinkat, having eaten even to their boots, were forced to make a despairing sortie, when, being attacked by immense numbers, and having hardly any ammunition, they were slaughtered to a man; and news coming that a like fate awaited the garrison and people of Tokar, a much more important town, immediate energetic action was decided upon. This was towards the end of January 1884, at a moment when General Gordon, travelling *via* the Nile and the Korosko Desert, was on his way from Cairo to Khartoum.

During the period of his sojourn at Suakin General Baker had been constantly applying for and receiving reinforcement from Egypt, and by the time that he was able to tranship his force from Suakin to Trinkitat—a favourable landing-place some miles to the southward, and distant only some thirty miles from Tokar—he had got together a little army of some 4,000 men. It was, in truth, a ragged and out-at-elbows army, ill-disciplined,

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ill-armed, ill-found, and ill-conditioned—a force wholly unfit to take the field, and as widely different from the magnificent Egyptian Army of to-day as is the cook's scullion on a canal flat from the smartest of smart men-o'-war's men. Two of the battalions had indeed served against us at Tel-el-Kebir; but their conduct on that occasion could scarcely be cited in their favour. Of the rest, save for a small force of Turkish infantry, and another of Turkish cavalry, the bulk were Bazinger blacks, or slave soldiers, and of these a number were armed only with flintlock guns, and were almost wholly unprovided with ammunition.

Time pressed, however; the fall of the beleaguered town, and consequent massacre of all within its walls, was reported imminent, and with a sad heart, and in much disgust, Baker prepared to do all that a man might.

Altogether, he had with him some 160 Europeans, Italians, Austrians, French, and Greeks, and a handful—no more—of Englishmen. His chief officers, also, were English, among them being the late Lord Kinnoul, then Fitzroy-Hay, and Harvey Pasha, both of the Black Watch, Colonel Sartorius, Major Douglas Giles, Captain Forrestier Walker, Maurice Bey, and Dr. Armand Leslie. Colonel Burnaby—who as an old friend of Baker had come, as he put it, "to see him through"—and a few correspondents—Cameron, Melton Prior, Macdonald and myself—also accompanied the force.

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CHAPTER IX

EL TEB

We leave Trinkitat. Our desert camel founders. A scratch meal. Forrestier Walker and the Fillapina. The composition of our forces. Our blindness. I accompany Douglas Giles and his cavalry. We are ambushed. A ride for life. I find a way into the square. Hell let loose. Forrestier Walker swept away. I find myself free and alone. The Soudanese spearmen. The Fillapina proves correct.

TOKAR IS SOME sixty-five miles south-west of Suakin and is best approached from Trinkitat, a point on the coast from which it is some thirty odd miles distant, while nigh midway lie the wells of El Teb, a convenient watering-place. To Trinkitat, therefore, the force was conveyed by such transport as availed, and a few days were spent in bridging with a causeway of balès of hay, sacks of sand and rubble, and lengths of planking, the wide morass that on all this coast divides the strip of coral shore from the mainland. By the 3rd of February, however, all was ready for the advance, a mud fort armed with four guns had been built at the land end of the causeway, and a final ultimatum had been sent to Osman Digna demanding surrender and free passage by the wells, to which that worthy had scornfully replied by repeated volleys of musketry. We had made all our arrangements for the attack on the morrow and had lazily watched for an hour the "dessert camel"—that is what we called the brute—who was loaded with such dainties as we had

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collected, floundering across the track over the causeway that led from the strip of sand that was called Trinkitat to our own stronghold, which we had named Fort Baker. The beast had blundered, had made mistakes, had behaved in fact according to his evil camel nature, and finally we had seen with grave concern his utter collapse in the marsh. He had made no protest—camels don't—but he sank fairly into the ooze of the Red Sea Littoral and carried our dinner with him.

No one of us, I think, had any intimate personal affection for that camel, but we all were keenly attracted by the viands, tins, and pots that he had dragged down to his place of untimely sepulture. However, campaigners are seldom left absolutely in the lurch, and in the difficulty each man made straightway for his saddle-bags, and re-returning produced some kind of comestible.

The banquet was perhaps anomalous in composition. Sardines, foie gras and Strasbourg paste mate but ill with mixed biscuits and preserved ginger, and cracknels and Cambridge sausage are a poor substitute for bread. Such, however, was the menu, while chocolate creams served at once for *hors d'œuvres* and dessert. They served—yes they served—but the loss of our commissariat animal left us a somewhat melancholy party. Men's flasks were empty for instance, and there was a certain thoughtfulness of how our holsters were to be filled on the morrow when we expected our big fight to come off. Still, a campaigning life after all is a happy-go-lucky one, and there were seventeen of us to sit down to the scratch meal around a commandeered plank trestled on two bales of compressed hay.

The absorption of tinned meats in whatever company is not the most enlivening of pastimes, and I will not pretend that the company was not morose in proportion to its dryness. Suddenly, however, a change came over

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the scene. Giammaria, our Italian messman, hove in sight laden with some half a dozen bottles of pilfered wine and further armed with a bag of almonds which he flaunted in triumph before us. It had been a sorry meal, but this was dessert, and we were to fight on the morrow. Forrestier Walker was our mess president, and therefore it was before him that the wine and dish of almonds was placed, and it was for him to deal with them.

The searchlights from the ships in the bay threw strange splashes of light upon us as they sought the enemy. The enemy from his haven in the scrub threw bullets back among us, which for the most part took no effect. Giammaria's advent with the cargo he bore was so loudly applauded that that cheerful, if unfortunate, Italian probably carried the joy of his welcome to the place he went so soon afterwards.

Anyhow, we cheered up, became conversational, and even developed gaiety, and as is usual at camp table we sang songs and told stories and barred speeches. Messadagla Bey, lately returned from his lieutenancy under Gordon in the Sudan, sung home airs of his beloved Palermo; Fred Burnaby, as was usual with him, sat very quiet and steady, with a bland smile for everyone on his pallid face.

Yussuf Bey (whom I have spoken of elsewhere—he was my boyhood's friend), commander of the tiny Turkish Legion, which was to be destroyed to a man on the morrow, Major Maurice Bey, Walter Goodall, who was afterwards Secretary to Khedive Tewfyk, Fitzroy Hay, the late Earl of Kinnoul, and grandfather of the present Earl, all contributed their best. Forrestier Walker, quite unlike himself, sat gloomy and silent at the top end of the plank that was our table. At length, and when the customary chorus had rung out across the morass, that old venerable shivaree of camp meetings, without

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which no soldier ditty seems complete to old stagers, was reached:

> Jolly good song and jolly well sung,
> Jolly good fellows every one,
> If you can beat it you're welcome to try.

And with its appeal to real friendship in a thirsty land—

> Please to remember the singer is dry.

Walker, called upon to take his turn, refused at first to respond. When challenged again, he stood up and spoke with an air of sad seriousness which we had never before known in him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I will declare myself. I cannot sing a song and I cannot tell a story, and my heart is too full to permit me to call a toast in any gladsome spirit; but if you will allow me, I will tell the fortune of every man sitting at this table, and these almonds shall be my medium."

He took from the tray of nuts before him one almond, cracked it in his teeth and handed it to Messadagla Bey who sat beside him. A full nut and a withered one fell out from the shell.

"Old chap," said Walker, "you will be hit up to-morrow."

He took another and handed it to the next man.

"Friend," he said, as two withered almonds dropped from the shell, "this is my adieu to you. I wish you fortune in the Better Land."

He passed on to the next guest near him, and by now most of us had come to consider the jest ill-timed. We even began to remonstrate; but Walker solemnly continued to pass around his damaged nuts to each person at the table.

Of the seventeen of us present twelve received double

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nuts, "Fillipinas," and to each of these recipients Walker said solemnly, "Good-bye."

To myself he said, "Scuddy, you are all right." To Walter Goodall he said, "You'll have a bad time." To Fred Burnaby, "It's not your time yet."

Then he rose.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have but one word to say. I have cracked a nut for myself, but I did not need the warning. I have got my call, and to-morrow morning Forrestier Walker will be lying under his guns.

That was the 3rd of February.

Next day, of the seventeen people who had broken meat together the previous night, no less than thirteen lost their lives in the fight.

Of the rest, Messadagla Bey was pierced through the hand and breast, and had a sword gash on the thigh which left him lame for life. Yussuf, my friend and companion, died, one of the last of his little force of Turkish infantry. I found and buried his tortured body a month later (when I was asked by Sir Gerald Graham to identify the Europeans) by the white gauntlets he had put on brand new, telling me they were in honour of his birthday. Fred Burnaby was not in the square, and though he tried his hardest to get killed (as I have said elsewhere he always rode for death), did not on that occasion lose his life. Walter Goodall was stabbed in the side and got a sword-cut on the head.

At dawn on the 4th the force paraded and moved off without loss of time through a sandy country, dotted with loose scrub breast high, which, sparse at first, grew denser as we advanced. The infantry were in echelon of battalions, the Egyptian cavalry formed a cloud in a semi-circle about our front at the usual distance, while between them and the infantry, some half a mile ahead, rode the General with his staff and the correspondents, having as

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an escort Major Giles and his Turkish horse. It was a glorious morning, and, rain having fallen during the night, we were free from the dust storm that rages commonly in this district nine months throughout the year, and with our glasses could sweep the country for miles around us. As I have said, the "Fuzzy" was an unknown quantity to us, and it would be difficult to imagine a more joyous and confident band of persons than we were as we set out for what we gaily spoke of as "a picnic to Teb." For this event, indeed, some had even prepared luncheon baskets, with champagne and other dainties. I have often wondered since what our conquerors thought of those foaming bottles when they tried them.

For at least a couple of hours we saw no sign of the enemy, but then our lenses traced a glint of steel away ahead, and soon we could perceive a large force of camel men, whose object seemed to be to turn our right flank; beyond them again, in our direct front we could distinguish a long line of spearmen crowning a low elevation. The General ordered up a gun, and we threw some dozen shells against this line of men, who disappeared, and then, as the camel men advanced apace on our flank, the order was given to Major Giles to head them off. I was chatting with the Major at the time, and as he said, "Come along," I accompanied him.

The camel men halted till our near approach, and then turned and dashed through the scrub, we following. In and out they led us, down one narrow sand lane after another, until at length, emerging on a wide open space, we found ourselves face to face with a great army of tribesmen, seated many lines deep, and with their shields before them and their spears across their knees.

This was a turning of the tables indeed. With a wild yell of delighted rage, the whole force leapt afoot and made at us, and as may be thought at once from pursuers we

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became pursued. The ground was impossible for cavalry, and as nigh every shrub in the lanes of scrub gave out a hidden foe, it was a question of each man for himself against heavy odds. In the wild race we made along those unknown paths towards our main body, our losses were very heavy, and they were aggravated by the fire of our fringe of Egyptian cavalry, by whose bullets, as we neared them, I saw four of my Turkish comrades fall.

Worse, much worse, however, was in store for us; as the scrub cleared, a scene such as I trust never again to behold was spread before me. From all points of the compass, from every bush almost, naked sword and spearmen were charging down upon our main body of troops, who were already hotly engaged on every side. Baker and his staff, with the gun, had been completely taken by surprise, and were galloping back towards the square that had been hurriedly and imperfectly formed (it may be said that they were unable to reach or enter it), while on either side of the group rode a cloud of Arabs on bare-backed horses, hacking at the gunners and escort.

As I followed, I saw three foreign and one English officer (Captain Watkins) fall beneath their spears, while a moment later, as we swept down the line of the square, its fire, to which, of course, we were fully exposed, emptied another couple of saddles. How Baker, Hay, Harvey, and Burnaby escaped that murderous fusilade, neither I nor they have ever comprehended. The General's idea and desire (seeing the instant disarray of the infantry) had been to get his cavalry together and make a diversion by repeated charges through the ever-increasing cloud of the enemy. This he was unable to accomplish, but the endeavour probably saved his life, as by it he avoided the disordered square. For my own part, as I rode down the line between the enemy and the *Bazingers*, I found the fire so hot (my horse was struck twice slightly in the

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neck and the quarter) that, seeing a gap, I made for it, and found myself within the square, and in the midst of as unholy a medley of confused and conflicting elements as could well surround a man. Pack mules and baggage camels, ambulances, gatling guns, two watercarts, together with shrinking, wounded Egyptian soldiers, unarmed camp followers, and here and there Fuzzy-Wuzzies in twos and threes (who had broken in, or—who knows?—perhaps had been "friendlies" with us) furiously stabing and slashing right and left, were all crowded together and jostling one another amid such a tumult of sounds as never was heard before or since; the overwhelming uproar of incessant fire, the grousing of the camels, the shriek of mules, the heart-rending wails of the wounded, the constant piteous appeals of the Egyptians to the Lady Zeinab for protection ("Ya seydna Zeinab dil wakti waktuk"—oh! holy Zeinab, now is thy time), while above all other sounds predominated the fierce hoarse battle yell of the oncoming Arabs.

For a while—all too brief—my horse could move a little, a pace this way or that. His wounds had made him very restless. During this brief moment of respite, Forrestier Walker, bleeding from the neck and shoulder, fell against me and murmured, "Oh, Scudie, Scudie!" and then the jostling mob parted us, and I saw him no more until I recognized his body three weeks later. Maurice Bey also I saw for an instant on a gun-carriage waving his sword, and he too disappeared. I had a glimpse of Armand Leslie striking at an Arab. But all these things were instantaneous, mere fleeting visions, a nightmare. Soon the crowd grew so dense around me that all volition was lost and my horse and I surged with it as the onslaught varied in intensity on one side or another. A rocket tube exploded beside me—how, I knew not; close by, a few Egyptian soldiers wrestled with a mounted officer to get

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his horse—I suppose with some thought of escape—they got it; after a desperate fight, he disappeared beneath the trampling heels.

More than once a like attempt was made on me, and now my horse's wounds were my salvation, for the maddened stallion kicked unceasingly at everything that touched his quarters, and struck savagely with his forefeet on both sides. I had a momentary glimpse of my friend Goodall, hatless and bleeding in the forehead. He afterwards told me that I looked very green (which is probably correct) and had my sword drawn (a sapper's weapon I carried for wood-cutting), a fact of which I was wholly unconscious. Of a sudden, to my intense surprise, I found myself in a clear space. Around me were dead and dying men; on my right, the thing that had been a square was rolling backward, girt with a triple fringe, whose gleaming weapons, dropping blood, flashed and flashed again as they stabbed and struck the now unresisting soldiery.

I cast my dazed eyes around me and noted in some vague way a stream of fugitives hurrying through the scrub, and guessed they were making for the fort. On either side of these hapless wretches who raced in a mob together like panic-stricken cattle ran groups of Arabs, who, far fleeter than they, killed them at will, and maimed while yet they held their hands. And then a strange thing happened to me—and marvellous as I think—on my left, some five and twenty paces distant, stood a party of Arabs, say thirty, who leant on their spears, tired of killing, and watched the slaughter. As I marked them, one fellow detached himself from the group and made straight at me. It seemed that I could see his eyes fixed on mine. I had a cocked revolver in my hand and, aiming, pulled the trigger. It missed fire, missed again a second time, and the man was then so near that, despairing,

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I flung it at him and struck him fair in the breast. And then he dashed past me, so close that he could have killed me by a turn of the wrist, and leaping on an Egyptian who, squatted on the ground, was pulling off his boots to run the better, seized him by the head and drove his great spear through his body into the ground. His eyes fixed on his prey, he had never seen me at all.

Then a pal, Maxwell, hailed me, and after brief consultation, we decided to make for the shore, but away from the stream of fugitives. And we had started, when I heard my name called, and looking, found an acquaintance, who, though not wounded, had been trampled on and badly bruised. I offered him my stirrup, and for a few paces he clung to this, and we fared on together; but the effort was too much for him, and I therefore dismounted and helped him on to my horse, hoping that by so doing we should make better progress. How the thing happened I will not pretend to say, but no sooner was my trampled friend in the saddle than my horse dashed forward, and I was left helpless. Maxwell, some twenty yards ahead, saw my big grey beast flash past with another rider, and, thinking me dead, looked round to see how I had fallen. By this time I had been marked by the Arabs, a few of whom had started in pursuit. Maxwell, however, wheeled, caught my outstretched hand, kicked a foot out of the stirrup that I might clutch the leather, and then, gripping me firmly by the wrist, we made off, none too soon, at a half gallop. Sometimes I think my feet did touch the ground during the mad race that followed, but for the most part of that 200 yards' sprint I seemed to be swinging from a trapeze. Fortunately, the severe strain was not for long, and as soon as might safely be, I was able to get up behind my preserver, and then, with revolver and Winchester, we turned and faced our pursuers. It imports little what

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vicissitudes we went through ere we got safely to the shore. Suffice that we did so, and that when we came to reckon up our losses, it was found that, of the 2,500 men killed that day, I was one of the six European survivors of that ill-fated square.

One other of our small party I later identified on that stricken field. He was a tall handsome Italian officer, formerly of the "Foreign Legion," and he went most joyously to his death. I saw him on the morning of the fight rejoicing in the fact that in his first battle he was wearing a new uniform, and his braveries were very pleasant to the eye. When I found him shortly after the second battle of Teb all his handsome clothing was gone, and his mutilated body lay so torn and mortified that it was only by the gold necklet he wore that I was able to recognize him.

And Forrestier Walker—as he had predicted—I found him under his guns.

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CHAPTER X

LORD KITCHENER

The Shipka Pass. Kitchener assists to rescue O'Donovan and myself. The story of his eyes. Lord Edward Cecil and "Wally." A little shooting and the bombardment of Alexandria. "Crush-me Dick" and the final shell. Human and humorous. Korosko. Sir Leslie Rundle. Kitchener's kingdom. Rundle's lessons to the Ababdeh Sheikh. Twelve years later. Orders to advance. The Sirdar and his A.D.C. rejoice. We entrain; Mother Nature against us. The gunboats arrive and are assembled. The disaster. Kitchener's tears and appeal. Lord Edward Cecil and his white horse. Conan Doyle and Julian Corbett. Colonel Cochrane. The chaste wife. Kitchener and Sergeant What's-his-name. Greatly loved and greatly maligned.

I FIRST MET LORD KITCHENER in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877—indeed, I met him twice in that Balkan campaign, and though both occasions were interesting, the second was certainly the more poignant so far as I was concerned. He was just then completing his four years' work on the Palestine Exploration Survey, and had taken a short leave from his duties in order to see for himself, as he said, how the Turks—for whom he had a high appreciation—shaped as fighting men in the Balkans. Thus it happened that I found myself on an occasion during that summer, in company with another Englishman, at the entrance to the Shipka Pass, at a time when the Turks were planning to retrieve the heavy defeats they had suffered there at the hands of the Russians. Together we accompanied Süleiman's forces in their valiant attack on Fort St. Nicholas, from which the Russians under Gourko had ousted them a fortnight previously. The

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attack, it may be said, was only temporarily successful, for three days later the enemy chased us out of the fort and out of the pass, which from that time ceased to be a Turkish possession.

On that occasion, albeit quite friendly and amicable—perhaps because I spoke Turkish while Syrian Arabic was his own Oriental language—I will not pretend that the future great soldier showed any particular desire for my acquaintance.

Our next meeting, however, was in different circumstances, and was for me peculiarly fortunate.

With my friend and colleague, Edmund O'Donovan (the famous *Daily News* correspondent, who later made an expedition to Merv, and afterwards met his death with Hicks Pasha in the Sudan in 1883), I had ridden across the Demir Dagh (the Iron Mountain) to visit a young Canadian doctor who lay ill at Samokoff. It was a time when the hapless Bulgars were suffering the harshest treatment at the hands of the Turks, and the evidences of bitter cruelty that met us on our journey roused O'Donovan's hot blood to a wild fury.

When we reached a village at the foot of the Dagh and found in its only street seventeen Bulgars hanging at their shop doors, my companion quite lost his head and apostrophized the Turks and Turkey, and particularly the commander in charge of the place, in a mixture of bad French and worse Turkish that quickly proved our undoing.

We were seized and haled before the Major—a tempestuous old gentleman, who at once decided that we were spies, and ordered us to be shot next morning. Of course there was no appeal. We were shut up in a sort of round house, where I am bound to say our guards were good to us, procuring for our money black olives, and dried sausage, and a crude Bulgarian vintage called Tatleh-Chiraz.

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It was a dull and melancholy vigil, enlivened only by my discovery of seven kinds of vermin, of which, despite my Eastern experiences, I was still ignorant.

But lo! with morning came our reprieve. The door opened, and instead of our executioners, entered the Major, subdued and affable, and with him three Englishmen. These were Sir Henry Fawcett (Consul-General in Turkey), Colonel Maitland, our Military Attaché at Constantinople, and my recent acquaintance, Captain Kitchener.

They had chanced to reach a village where we had stayed, and a friendly Bulgar telling them of our plight, they had hurried to our relief.

The Major asked us to breakfast. Kitchener at that time—as indeed he remained for many years—was lean as a gutted herring, as active as a panther, and tanned, by his long stay in Palestine, to the blackness of an Arab complexion. Shrewd and far-thinking as he was, he was filled with enthusiasm for any cause that interested him, and was instinct with the kindliest sympathy for any man whom he believed to be striving to do good work. This human quality, to my own knowledge, was a keynote in his character during all the years I knew him in the field—which extended down to the triumphant days of the Omdurman Campaign in 1898—and men who worked closest to him at the War Office in 1914–15 declare that he retained it to the end.

It became a fashion when Kitchener began to be famous to speak of him as a stern martinet and to allude to the penetrating gaze of his cold steely eyes. Stern he was, to the extent that he asked the utmost endeavour from his subordinates—himself insisting always on doing at least as much as any of them; while as for the steely glance, it has already been told that he had practically lost the sight of one eye, while serving with General

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Chanzy's division—the Chasseurs du Nord—in 1870. The accident which badly impaired his vision made him fear seriously for his career as a soldier in his earlier war years. I never saw him in glasses in the field, but he invariably wore them in his own quarters.

In this connection Lord Edward Cecil—who was attached to him in 1896, 1897, and 1898, the years of the re-conquest of the Sudan—used to tell a quaint story. Riding together one day, Lord Kitchener rather testily asked of him, "Who is that ragged-looking officer over there?"

It was an opportunity not to be missed.

"That's your brother Walter, sir," said Cecil. (Walter was at this time a Colonel.)

"Ah, so it is," mused the Sirdar. "I ought to have known poor Wally. He always wears those red tabs in the wrong place."

I have always believed Lord Kitchener to be a shy man. But he was extremely human and had a whimsical sense of humour all his own.

When the Arabi trouble in Egypt ripened to a head in 1882, he obtained leave from Cyprus—as he said "to get a little shooting"—and he viewed the bombardment of Alexandria from the deck of H.M.S. *Invincible*. I have often heard him tell with delight the story of the last shot fired by us on that memorable July 11, 1882. (I also was in that *galère*.)

The signal to cease fire had been made from the Flagship, and was, of course, instantly obeyed; but it appears that on the *Invincible* was a piece of ordnance—an early type of quick-firer (I believe)—which when once prepared for action could not be unloaded without considerable danger to its gun-crew.

"Gunnery Jack" who had to deal with this weapon was Lieutenant Richard Poore—now Admiral Sir Richard

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Poore, Bart. (retired), but then affectionately known in the Service as "Crush-me Dick."

He accordingly asked and received permission to fire his piece.

Every ship in the fleet, of course, had read the signal, and all glasses were *braqués* on the fort, which was Poore's objective.

"'Crush-me,'" said Kitchener, "laid his gun well and true, and the shell sped. An excellent shot—it landed plump in the centre of the upper works. An immense cloud of dust and debris darkened the air for a moment. But when this cleared away, an old woman rushed frantically from an outhouse and chased in some fowls, afraid lest harm befall them."

It was said at the time that Kitchener had broken his leave in order to see the bombardment. But if this be so, his services immediately afterwards became so extremely valuable that the offence was at once condoned.

His humour, as I have said, was whimsical. In 1884, when Gordon was beleaguered in Khartoum, and the Home Government was vacillating between sending a relief expedition up Nile, or leaving it alone, Kitchener, then a Miralai under Sir Evelyn Wood, was stationed at Korosko, having with him Sir Leslie Rundle as second in command. Their mission was to raise a corps of native levies from the powerful Nubian tribe of Ababdeh Arabs, one-half of whom by reason of their territorial propinquity had been forced to join—against their will—the Mahdi's forces, while the remainder, nearer to our position, adhered stedfastly to the Khedive. The underlying idea, since Gordon refused to leave Khartoum, was, that the two British officers with their Ababdeh should make a cutting-out expedition and bring the recalcitrant hero away from Khartoum whether he would or no. The plan never came

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to fruition because the Wolseley Expedition was decided on, but there is little doubt that down to a certain period it might have been successful.

Anyhow, Kitchener and Rundle spent the long summer months at Korosko, which never belied its reputation as the Gateway to Hell in the matter of temperature. And there "Crush-me Dick" (who had come up Nile with the first and only river steamer—a paddle boat—that was later got through the Bab-el-Kebir of the Second Cataract), Phillip Durham Trotter, who commanded the frontier, and I, whom *The Times* had sent up the river immediately after my return from the Eastern Sudan, used frequently to spend week-ends with the *Miralai* and the *Bimbashi*. During those long hot evenings we would lie on the edge of Korosko's cliff shore catching what coolness came from the flowing river beneath and listened while Kitchener expounded quaint theories for the control and administration of the wild Sudanese.

"Give me," he would say, "fifty thousand pounds and let me select my own staff of electrical engineers, and the thing could be done. I myself as supreme chief would build me a palace in some convenient spot where the doors would always be open and its approaches free and unguarded. Within I should remain a kind of veiled prophet, a Mokanna, never to be seen unless he so willed, but possessed of dread and mysterious powers. That, of course, is where my electrical engineers would come in." This whimsical idea he would elaborate as fancy moved him. On one occasion I ventured to ask him how he would deal with the missionary efforts which would inevitably be directed towards his kingdom.

"Ah," he said grimly, "there you have got me. I'm afraid we should have to take strong measures against missionary enterprise."

It was, of course, merely charming nonsense, but in view

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of all that its author accomplished and became it is interesting to look back to.

While Kitchener thus beguiled his leisure, his companion Rundle found other means of amusement. One was to give lessons in English to the Ababdeh Sheikh (a son of the head of the tribe, then a prisoner in the Mahdi's camp). Rundle's method was this. He would tap his own breast and say to the listening Arab, "Rundi great man, Rundi fine soldier, splendid fellow," and then with the same inflection of voice but a deprecatory finger would add, "Kitchener stupid chap," and then a little more impressively, "Kitchener dam fool," ending in accents of ardent admiration, "Kitchener muffin man."

The Sheikh diligently learned these phrases and remembered them, though later their real meaning must have been explained to him, as I came to know some twelve years afterwards. I had ridden out with my friend E. F. Knight (in 1896) to the wells of Murat, our farthest native outpost in the desert (and close to Abu Hamid, which was then a Dervish stronghold). My old friend of the Korosko days, now head man of his tribe, was in charge of this little fort. I was aware of his identity, but did not expect him to recognize me. Nor did he at first. He received us with the graceful courtesy of a great Arab chief and placed himself entirely at our disposal. There was, however, some little restraint about our conversation, until I approached him and whispered softly in his ear:

"Rundi great man, Kitchener stupid chap, Kitchener dam fool."

Immediately his eyes lit up and he leapt to his feet.

"Wah muffin man *Kaman*" (into the bargain), he exclaimed gleefully.

And then he smote his forehead.

"Istaffr Allah!" he cried (God forbid that I should have said it). Our friendship was renewed from that moment.

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When in 1896 the decision was taken by our Home Government that an advance should be made into the Sudan and that Akasheh should be occupied, the news came as a surprise to everyone in Cairo. It was said at the time that the decision had been taken by three powerful Cabinet Ministers after a pleasant dinner, and point was given to this story from the fact that nobody either in England or Egypt could understand why Akasheh of all places should have been mentioned as the goal. But anyhow, the joyous information reached Kitchener a good many hours before the Egyptian Government had any knowledge of the proposed operations. The telegram got to Cairo late at night, and was taken in due course to Bimbashis, Lord Athlumney, and Jimmie Watson at the Turf Club. Having hurriedly de-coded it, these two delighted officers set out in different directions to find the Sirdar, who they knew was attending certain social functions. At length they gravitated one after the other to Kitchener's house, where the chief lived entirely alone, his servants being quartered in the garden.

Watson got there first, and finding the place in darkness, proceeded to throw pebbles against Kitchener's bedroom window to attract his attention. At length a figure in pyjamas appeared, lamp in hand, and somewhat annoyed.

Watson begged him to come down to the door, which he did. A few moments later Athlumney, arriving post haste, discovered the delightful tableau of the Sirdar pyjama'd, with a lamp in one hand and the precious telegram in the other, dancing a wild fandango round the hall, with his A.D.C. holding him by both elbows.

By midday on the morrow the expeditionary force had already begun to entrain.

Kitchener felt reverses very keenly. He could stand a great deal of misfortune with stoic courage, which merely increased his determination to succeed. But sometimes

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I have known even his great spirit to break down for a bit under the bitter blows of fate.

In that year of '96 our small expeditionary force was stricken by a succession of disasters—disasters at the hand of Nature, not of the enemy. There was an exceptionally low Nile, which delayed our progress. It was a summer of extraordinary sand and rain storms in a region known as the "rainless zone." Our camps were attacked and devastated by an epidemic of cholera of peculiarly deadly character. There were hardly any recoveries among those stricken by the disease, and its ravages in a force which contained in all less than 100 English officers were heartbreaking to the Sirdar. Then again a storm of unprecedented violence destroyed in one night thirty miles of Girouard's newly constructed railway embankment, and left twelve miles of rails swaying in mid air over a valley filled with water nowhere less than 6 feet deep; all the work had to be done over again. Finally, these misfortunes having been overcome, there was vexatious delay in the arrival from England of the light steel stern-wheeler gunboats which were being sent out in sections, to be assembled on the Nile by British naval artificers. Kitchener stood all these reverses with admirable fortitude and patience.

But even his nerve gave way on one occasion. The gunboats were being assembled at the slips on the Nile bank at Kosheh, which had been our gloomy camp for several months. We used to call the slips the Club, because as many officers as could be spared from duty used to foregather there each afternoon to watch and chat over the progress of the work. One little vessel had been completed all save the placing of her multi-tube boilers, which we learned one day were to arrive from Cairo the next morning. The advance on Dongola had been fixed for a date three days ahead, and when we met at the slips

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on this ill-fated afternoon the boilers were there and the shears had been set for lowering them into the frail little craft (she drew but 18 inches). Everyone was agog and happy. The Sirdar was beaming. When suddenly the catastrophe occurred. To this day I cannot recall the cause of the accident, but while we gazed aghast the heavy mechanism slipped from its controlling cables and crashed sheer through the bottom of the gunboat into the Nile bed.

Then Kitchener broke down.

He stood for a moment silent, and then, the tears pouring down his cheeks, raised both hands towards Heaven and cried in piteous accents :

" Oh, God, what have I done to deserve this ? "

His gesture seemed to me to recall what we have read of that made by Bonaparte when his men were disappearing through the broken ice of the Borodino on his retreat from Moscow. For a long time no one spoke. Then we all began to slip noiselessly away. Lord Edward Cecil, beside whom I had been standing, our horses' reins over our arms, said to me in a tense whisper :

" I don't think I dare go back to the Chief this afternoon. I fancy I'd better take my old white horse and an army ration and go and bivouac out in the hills until the morning. He'll have pulled himself together by then."

As of course Kitchener did.

The advance on Dongola was not delayed by one hour—that was Kitchener's way.

In 1896 my friend E. F. Knight and I (with one or two other correspondents) escorted Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the late Sir Julian Corbett on a camel ride journey from Asswân, where is the First Cataract to Wadi Halfa, thirty miles south of which place begins the turbulent water of the Second, or greatest, of the six Cataracts of the Nile. Our route, which ran never more than a mile or

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two inland from the Nile bank, lay through the Batt'n el Hagg'r (the belly of rock), one of the wildest, most precipitous, and inhospitable of thoroughfares. I had done it before many times during the Gordon Relief Expedition of 1884–85. But to all my companions the ride was a novel experience. To "Dogger" Knight, who had been with Younghusband and Dr. Robertson to the Pamir Dunya (which produced his delightful volume *Where Three Empires Meet*), the difficulties of our mountain paths were small beer. For on that formidable enterprise he had been in the habit of crossing ravines by a swaying bridge formed of brushwood with a meagre handrail of grass rope, the whole frail fabric rocking and swaying with the breezes that rose from the river torrent that rushed a thousand feet below. But Doyle and Corbett—who declared that till then they had neither of them ever slept out of a comfortable bed beneath a well-planned ceiling—both found the journey somewhat trying.

However, they endured all hardships with most genial good humour, and while neither of them was in his first youth, were certainly among the most promising novices I have ever known.

To spare them, so far as might be—for the day heat of the Batt'n el Hagg'r defiles rivals that of the Bab-el-Korosko itself—I elected to travel by night—there was a moon that served—and generally one would load up just before sundown after a pleasant and companionable meal. As a rule I led the caravan, with a Bishari guide, and usually Sir Arthur Conan Doyle followed immediately behind me. Riding a-camel back, on a native saddle—which is something like a gravy dish—must have been irksome to a man unaccustomed, and somewhat bulky, but he took all happenings in good part. Generally he sang, and we all helped with the chorus. From my position in advance, I would hear the burden of "Blow the man

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down," or "Whisky Johnny, whisky," suddenly broken by a crash, and looking back would see Doyle's camel prone on the track, with the great novelist sitting on the beast's head and still singing blithely.

This may seem a long prelude to a Kitchener story, but here we come to our muttons.

An outcome of that Batt'n el Hagg'r experience was Conan Doyle's very successful romance, *The Tragedy of the Korosko*, which appeared the following year. (It is now filmed and on the screen.) In this story, it will be remembered, figured an aged retired Colonel, one Cochrane, one of whose idiosyncrasies was that he wore stays to support his crumbling figure.

It chanced that at the time the oldest officer in Kitchener's army was also a Colonel Cochrane—a splendid handsome figure of a soldier, six foot one in height and magnificently proportioned.

Well, soon after the *The Tragedy of the Korosko* appeared I was dining with the Sirdar in his mud house at Berber, which we had just occupied. Somehow—of course he led it—the conversation turned on journalism and authorship. At last Kitchener, a twinkle in his eye, said:

"My dear Scudamore, I confess that I cannot understand you writing-folk. Now look at Conan Doyle. We had him up with us for a bit in '96; we were good to him, showed him every hospitality, and what has he done? He has written a story—a charming story I admit—in which he has pilloried one of my most valued officers, portraying him as a valetudinarian who wears corsets. Now is this a proper return? I am sure that poor Cochrane does nothing of the kind, and if he has seen it the accusation must have been very galling to him." Again he beamed—for of course he knew quite well that Sir Arthur had taken the name haphazard and had no knowledge that there was a Colonel Cochrane in Kitchener's

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army. But Kitchener was like that, with merry lapses, in the midst of his strenuous and terrible anxieties.

On one occasion some important news had reached us from the Khalifa's stronghold of Omdurman. A man, one of Gordon's native lieutenants, had escaped after thirteen years' captivity, and had reached Dongola by the old slave route. The story was exciting and valuable, and Sir Reginald Wingate said to me: "I don't know it all yet myself. Come over to the Chief's hut and you shall have the latest."

The Sirdar—delighted with the inside information gained—was in most genial mood. He told me the whole tale of the escaped man's trials and hardships as he trailed the sad Sikat el Arbaeen (the western slave track), though little, I must allow, of the information he had brought.

"He naturally made for Dongola," he concluded, "because it was there he had left his wife thirteen years ago, and of course he was chased."

I do not know what devil prompted me.

"And was she also chaste, sir?" I ventured shyly!

The Sirdar gave a great laugh and then frowned.

"Look here, Scudamore," he said sternly, "you had best get back to your telegrams—I am afraid they will have to be censored."

I rose to leave the hut, somewhat abashed; but ere I reached the mat door the chief spoke again.

"You'd better come to lunch to-morrow," he said, "we may have something more for you."

Of Lord Kitchener's human kindness, of his instant appreciation of good service, of his regard and helpfulness for any "Sergeants What's-his-name," whose health had broken down and to whom he would quietly hand a fistful of sovereigns (from his own pocket) to help them on long home leave—many stories could be told.

In 1919 I chanced to discuss his noble character with

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Colonel Gort, who had been his closest associate at the War Office in the first year of the war.

"Ah," said the Colonel, "you knew him. So did I. He was one of the finest gentlemen that has ever lived. But how he has been maligned."

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CHAPTER XI

SOME OF "KITCHENER'S MEN"

Wingate the indefatigable. Knowledge of natives; their many languages, tribal customs and feuds. His retirement the nation's loss. Kindliest of press censors. Slatin and Wingate lunch with me in Cairo. My practical joke. The story of Slatin Pasha. Tales of his captivity. The Arab guide and his endurance. The story of Slatin's escape after thirteen years' captivity. Sir Archibald Hunter, fighting leader of Kitchener's army. "The enemy of God." The vagaries of bullets. A happy family. Broadwood and his officers. The Omdurman reconnaissance. Winston Churchill and his luck and pluck.

WHERE ALL WERE so admirable, it is difficult to decide with whom to begin. But I think, after due consideration, that first place should be given to Sir Reginald Wingate, because undoubtedly, without Wingate's aid, Kitchener could never have carried to success his enterprise of the reconquest of the Sudan. Reggie Wingate—I first met him in 1884—when he was A.D.C. to Sir Evelyn Wood (in the Nile Expedition), was, and is, one of those men who, when they take up a subject for study, are not content until they have absorbed everything that is within it. He had already—young though he was—distinguished himself in India, where he had acquired a knowledge of several native languages; but when he came to Africa the marvellous complexities of that wonderful continent took permanent hold of him, and he set himself to assimilate each peculiarity of its anomalies. This purpose he achieved, during the years when he was Kitchener's "intelligence," with complete success. I make

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bold to say that at the present time there is no British public servant possessed of so illuminating and intimate a knowledge—as has Sir Reginald—of the diverse factors that go to make up the African character. They are so multiple that it would need an encyclopædia to enumerate them, and this he carries in his brain. The history, the causes of animosity, the tribal feuds, the sectarian enmities (within the faith of Islam) that sway, and seethe always among, the thousand races that people the dark continent, are to this soldier student an open book. For he was never content to limit his investigations to the Sudan and its contiguous regions (though that were a sufficient task), but pursued them from coast to coast. "Africa," he would say, "is a land of vast divergencies, yet somehow they are all interlocked."

At the time of Kitchener's Nile Expedition Wingate had reached the point when he not only knew that a native lied (that is simple, because they always do), but could read the underlying purpose of the falsehood and sense what it was exactly that the man sought to conceal. His forced resignation (heaven knows why) from the service in which he was so brilliant an ornament was a blow from which we shall never recover. Our relations with Egypt to-day are sufficient and sinister proof.

One of the simplest and kindliest of men, he was, I think, the most indefatigable worker I have ever known—and everybody worked in Kitchener's army.

During those three years of Kitchener's reconquest of the Sudan it was my custom at about 6.30 each morning to ride over from wherever I might be to the "intelligence quarters," where Wingate and Slatin Pasha (with their staff of native clerks and emissaries) were established.

"Come in and bite a bit," Wingate would say, and during our meal he would insist on talking Turkish to

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me—to increase his vocabulary—or would put questions on Persian derivatives which I found it hard to answer.

He was our press censor, and—save for Lord Methuen at Tel-el-Kebir—the kindliest, most human and sympathetic press censor I have ever known. He knew quite well that London newspapers did not send—at vast expense—their representatives to campaigns merely to send home the "hand-outs" that every General in the field fondly believes are the only information that the British public has a right to receive concerning costly military operations for which it has to pay the bill. And he was an untiring and helpful intermediary between myself and the Sirdar. He was also a sure guide. I am proud to say that in all that time I never had a telegram "blue-pencilled."

A man filled with generous humour. When, as very often happened, he and Slatin Pasha used to come over to my camp to dine, off such unappetizing provender as we could obtain (in a land where there was no fresh meat, or fresh vegetables, or even eggs, but everything was tinned), he would sing in a pleasant mellow voice "The long, long Indian day"—which is the litany of all Anglo Indians—while Slatin would follow with his only tune:

> Ach meine liebe Augustine—
> Augustine—Augustine.

And our talk on every imaginable subject would continue until the sky grew pale with the coming dawn.

I recall how—in one of our intervals of desert campaigning—when we were all back in Cairo, Wingate and Slatin came to lunch with me at the Savoy—at the time Cairo's most charming hotel. I had arranged a little joke, and as I led my guests into the vast, crowded dining-room, I told them that as we had been now six weeks out of harness, I had thought it would be pleasant to them to

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have a desert luncheon just as we did in the dust-choking atmosphere of the Atbara. Slatin wilted and consulted his watch, but Wingate merely tightened his lips and tried to smile. We reached a reserved table, where was spread out a repast. A great tin of "bully beef," another of "Maconachie ration," some sardines (all garlanded with rose leaves), a few bottles of Rosbach water, and a flagon of *Abu-battn* whisky.

Wingate sat down and unfolded his table napkin. "We didn't often have these," he said rather glumly.

And then, just as the native servants began to hand round the horrid cates, the *maître d'hôtel* came up and announced:

"Your luncheon is served over here, sir," pointing to a flower-decked table, where sat Sir Arthur and Lady Sloggett and other guests, who had been delighted spectators of our comedy.

* * * * *

Throughout those years of reconquest Wingate and Rudolf Slatin lived together. So far as Sudan intelligence went, the one was the complement of the other. They knew that throughout the Khedive Abbas Hilmi was in intimate correspondence with the Khalifa, and was striving —ill-advised as he was, by his German and Austrian friends—to destroy Kitchener's chances of success. They had caught many messengers, sent by the Khalifa, bearing letters to the Abdin palace, but so cunning and well devised had been the plans of Abbas's assistants that never once did a direct message from the Khedive to the dictator of Omdurman fall into their hands. All across the desert face we had a cloud of estafettes—guards, spies, trackers—all experienced men, holding up all the possible water holes, past which any enemy messenger must surely travel. It was all of no avail. I believe these communications were transmitted through Tunis, where (there was

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great bitterness between our two countries at the time) French agents lent countenance and gave help to the traffic.

Anyhow, nothing sufficiently incriminating for use ever came to hand.

I used to chaff Slatin on his absurdly youthful appearance—it must be remembered that it was but a brief year earlier that he had escaped after his thirteen years' imprisonment in the Khalifa's camp, and that during those years he had ever at all times known that within the next hour he might be slaughtered at the whim of Abdullahi. Every now and again he was thrown into prison—the house of stone—clamped with some hundredweights of elephant chains, under whose burden he could but lie prone on the dank and stinking earth. Any little untoward happening threatened him with disaster. On one occasion, a bowman—they still use bows in the Sudan—brought into the Khalifa's palace a stork he had shot, and around whose leg was clipped a metal ring with a label attached. Slatin, taking a little rest in his hut, was summoned and brutally hurried to the place where the Khalifa sat in council with his emirs.

"This must be a communication to Slatin," was the cry. A message from the hated Turks—the Sudanese called the English the Turks. He must translate it to the Council, and if his explanation were not satisfactory, he should die. Poor Slatin examined the label, which stated—I forget the exact words—that the bird, whose leg had been broken somehow, had nested for years, during a certain period, on the roof of a house in South Russia, whose owner had tended it and ringed it, in the hope that someone, somewhere, if opportunity served, would tell him in what part of the world it spent its summers. He was interested in the migration of birds.

A very proper aspiration on the part of a naturalist,

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but it nearly cost Rudolf Slatin his life. As it was it gained him another eight months in the Beit-al-Haggr.

But Slatin was an extraordinary man. To my chaff over his youthful looks he would smilingly say, "Yes, but you must remember I have been out of the world—dead—for thirteen years. Those you must cut out of my life."

Slatin used to sit, Arab fashion—barefooted and one leg tucked under the other—on his anghareb, in the shade of his hut or tent or *rucuba* (a beehive straw hut)—whichever it might be—in the "intelligence camp," and I used to visit him to make him talk of his marvellous experiences in captivity. He had been in all nineteen years in the Sudan, and had only had speech with a white man thrice in all that time. He would tell me how through the ruthless depopulation of the Sudan provinces by the Khalifa's wholesale practice of slaughter, great tracts of country were so divested of human beings that the lions would attack isolated villages in droves, and how in the forest lands even the Khalifa's punitive forces dared not travel in groups of less than fifty armed with guns. Giraffes—we had not one in our London Zoo at the time—ranged the Bahr-el-Ghazel in herds; hyenas stalked nightly through the streets of every village. Misery was everywhere. Even the desert trackers—those keen Arabs, whose life business it is to trace water reserves in the rainless zone, the discovery of which might shorten by days a journey between far distant points—were among the unemployed.

I recall how one day when I was sitting with Sir Rudolf—who was always receiving messages from his spies and trackers—an old sheikh barracked his camel some fifty yards away from us and hobbled towards the Pasha's hut. As he approached and bent to kiss Slatin's hand I noticed that he had but one foot, and that the other leg ended

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in a long sliver of white bone. Their conversation ended, the old man limped back to his beast and went away.

Slatin turned to me.

"Scudie," he said, "that is the type of the desert tracker of old time in the Sudan, and his story is interesting. There had been a long drought (in that region rain falls about once in twelve years), and he had gone out on his usual mission, which was to locate places where the water after the last storm had collected in the pockets of the sponge-like rocks that dot the deserts, in order to find a shorter route between Omdurman and Assouan. He was led astray by mirage; not the ordinary mirage—the Ma-al-Kadab (the lying water), with men and beasts walking along a river bank (where no river is), and with boats with sails, and houses and palm trees in the background. That would deceive no Arab tracker. But this was a configuration of rocks—copjes—honeycombed like sponges and showing indications that water might be found in their hollows. Therefore he rode on and on and on until, the atmosphere changing, he recognized his deception and found that he was lost. (These men, it should be said, do not use the compass and do not read the stars, and to me it has always been a mystery how they ever reach their goal.)

"He journeyed on—amid the trackless shifting sands, becoming hourly weaker and more thirst-parched—for through a fall of his weary naga, the gazelle skin that held his water supply had been burst—until at last the camel, with an instinct finer than the human, smelt that there really was water somewhere ahead. She quickened her pace, her neck outstretched, and coming to one of those crumbly hillocks of gnarled boulders (that usually indicate the presence of a water-hole) the poor beast fell, bringing her rider down with a crash. And in the fall his leg caught between the hard edge of the wooden saddle and

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a spike of stone, snapped like a pipe-stem at the ankle, so that when he looked the foot was dangling and the bones protruded through the skin. He crawled after the camel to the water-hole, and having drunk took counsel with himself. He knew that something must be done and at once, for in a few hours mortification of the foot would set in. But he was already so weakened, that he feared that should he cut the foot off with his knife he would probably faint before he had time to tie up the arteries. So after reflection he crept around and gathered a quantity of the dry scrub that always grows around these water-places and built him a fire. Then he scraped up sufficient mud from the two-foot deep well and made a plaister round the leg above the wound. Then he stuck his foot in the flames and burned it off.

"After this, as he said simply, when telling the story, *Couti Tarban Āwy* (I was very tired). So he rested two days before he started to find his way back to the Nile."

A pretty story of Sir Rudolf Slatin Pasha (I wish I had space for more of them) deals with his arrival at the camp of Assouan (then the Egyptian frontier) after his flight from Omdurman in 1895. He was expected—or at least hoped for—but so many attempts at his rescue had failed, that there could be no sort of certainty that he had won clear, and the stray dervishes who were constantly being brought in as prisoners were unanimous in their belief that he could never evade the Mahdist patrols.

It fell, therefore, that when one morning (about the time when we might hope for definite news) a particularly ragged and dirty Dervish fell into the hands of our outposts, he was at once haled before Sir Archibald Hunter (Commandant of the frontier) for cross-examination.

I have the story, partly from Wingate, partly from Sir Archibald, and partly from Lord Athlumney, who was then on Hunter's staff.

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The prisoner was brought before the Colonel, who sat with his officers at the side of a long table. He was bare-headed and bald, nearly black of complexion, and from his features apparently a pure bred Arab of the Jaälin tribe. He was obviously terrorized—trembling all over. Not a word could be extracted from him in reply to questions. The man simply could not speak, but kept continually turning his head over his shoulder towards the open doorway as though in fear of pursuers. Everyone present was disconcerted. It was apparently another disappointment.

Then someone—I think Athlumney—slipped away, and a few minutes later came back with a tall glass of foaming lager beer in his hand. This he handed—without a word—to the shivering captive. Slatin—for of course it was he—drained the cool liquor at a draught, and burst into tears. Then in a flood of mixed broken French and English he told the vivid story of his escape. That night, spick and span in a borrowed neat white uniform, he sparkled at mess and in the anteroom, telling to his delighted hosts innumerable tales of his nineteen years of Sudan adventure, of which thirteen had been spent as a prisoner.

* * * * *

No story treating of Kitchener's reconquest of the Sudan during '96 to '98—or, indeed, you might say from 1892 till the time when we finally put an end to the Mahdist terror that had obsessed a half of Africa—could be adequate without special mention of Archie Hunter—General Sir Archibald Hunter—who was the fighting leader of Kitchener's army. My always regretted friend and comrade George Warrington Steevens (who died at twenty-eight in Ladysmith) gave so happy a description of Hunter, whom he described as "the sword of the army," in his book *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (in which volume, by

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the way, I am constantly mentioned as the Mess President) that there is little left to me to say that might not read as plagiarism.

Hunter, during those long years, was the man of the frontier. He was always the chief in closest touch with our dervish enemy, and undoubtedly was always the carrier out—and generally the initiator—of Kitchener's enterprises against him. During all that time a long and increasingly acrimonious correspondence was carried on between Hunter and the Khalifa. In these letters, in which Kitchener was invariably alluded to as "the enemy of God" by the dervish chieftain, the two fighters would set forth the horrible punishment that each would inflict on the other should he happen to be caught. Hunter was to be boiled in oil, Abdullahi to be crucified upside down, with other pleasantries thrown in as makeweight.

Yet with it all, and though Hunter was tireless in energy, constantly out night and day on reconnaissance, I believe the Colonel was never for a moment free from cruel pain. He carried a bullet in his breast (it was before the saving days of the X-ray discoveries), that he had received in perhaps as quaint a set of circumstances as I have known—though to be sure the vagaries of bullets almost pass belief.

It was the night before our fight at Ginniss, in the early days, that "Archie" collected his packet.

From a hole in the wall of a Sakeeyeh on the East Nile bank, Hunter and two brother officers watched a big party of dervish scouts patrolling the west bank of the river. The hole was narrow, and the three officers stood one behind the other—Hunter being the rear man—while the front man, whose name I have forgotten, had the field-glasses. The rays of the setting sun glinted on the lenses of the glasses, and the dervishes, always swift to observe, opened fire on this objective. After a few shots, a bullet, well

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directed, crashed straight through the lens, through the eye and head of him who held them, through the shoulder of Colonel Hackett Thompson, who was middle man, and came to rest in Archie Hunter's breast—a curious incident. Maybe Sir Archibald has by now had that lump of lead removed—I do not know. But throughout those years of Sudan fighting it remained his tenant, and gave him constant suffering.

* * * * *

The Sudan campaign was popular with service men, and Kitchener had his pick from a long tale of the younger officers of the British Army. There was a waiting list of applicants for employment on the Nile, some 2,500 strong, and while, doubtless, he would have found others as eminently capable and brilliant as those he chose, it must be allowed that in every case the selections he made admirably justified his judgment.

They were in all but a small band, and they worked together with a harmony that made desert warfare as near a delight as warfare can be. We were a happy family, south of Assouan, and it is an abiding proud memory to me that, mere outsider though I was, I was admitted to the friendship of all in this group of fine soldiers. They were all splendid.

Take Broadwood (we were at school together as small boys, at Cooks, in Brighton), who commanded the Gyppy Cavalry in 1898 with Earl Haig—then a Major as his chief staff officer—Sir Bryan Mahon as second in command, and Lord Tullibardine (Bardie), the present Duke of Atholl, and Prince Francis of Teck, among his very capable assistants.

I recall how the day before Omdurman—I was permitted to ride with them on reconnaissance—we trekked right up to what is known as " the round hill " in front of Omdur-

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man, and little more than a thousand yards from the Khalifa's walls. We lunched together on the summit of the hill, and while we fed could note an extraordinary stir and flutter of growing excitement within the rabbit warren town. Soon the dervishes, with banners and drums and obeyas—which are war horns—booming, poured forth from various small gates in ever increasing streams until at length the whole force—some 65,000 strong—had formed up outside the town, and after a brief time began to advance against our hill.

It was time to go—more than time. For we had some guns with us, and for them progress was desperately slow over the black broken cotton soil terrain. They chased us almost back to our camp. We learned later that the Khalifa thought that we were the advance guard of Kitchener's army, and that we were about to attack his city—which was certainly the last thing the Sirdar had in his mind.

That black cotton soil, torn into wide deep crevasses, that stretched often as much as three miles inland, gave terrible trouble to both the English and the Gyppy Cavalry.

And in this connection, here is a story of Mr. Winston Churchill, who—himself a 12th Lancer's man—had got attached to the 21st, under Colonel Rowland Hill Martin. Churchill—he was twenty-three at the time—had recently come back from an Indian Frontier campaign, against the Waziris, I think, as an outcome of which he had written a book in which he had reviewed, with some considerable freedom of criticism, the policy, strategy, intelligence, etc., with which the operations had been conducted. As a result, when he came out to the Nile, there was a certain nervousness, as regarded him, among most officers above the rank of a mud major. It befell then that when the final advance on Omdurman began,

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and the whole cavalry force started its three weeks' ride from the Atbara base along the west bank of the river, this sprightly young subaltern found himself left at the base in charge of sick horses.

This, of course, did not suit Mr. Churchill at all, and with the able aid of Lady Randolph he set to pulling every available string until—no matter the process—he received the welcome authority to rejoin the 21st Lancers at the front, accompanied by a warning that he must hurry up if he would be in time for the great fight.

This is the prelude—now for the story :

With G. W. Steevens and Will Maud, of the *Graphic*, I was sitting one evening in our rude bivouac on the Nile bank. It was some three days before the big fight. We sat under a spreading Adansonia tree with our lanterns twinkling beside us. We lounged on our blankets, leaning against our saddles, our big umbrellas spread above us to prevent the scorpions and tarantulas (a very venomous breed) dropping on to our heads from the branches above, and we were enjoying our last drink and our last chat before bedding down.

It was a pitchy night—not even a star—and suddenly a voice came to us out of the darkness.

" Can any of you gentlemen," said the unknown, " kindly direct me to the lines of the 21st Lancers.

I went forward with a light and found a figure on horseback. I explained that it was quite impossible to get to the cavalry lines in the dark, that even in daylight it was necessary to make a wide detour into the desert to escape the water-filled rifts in the ground, and I proposed that the rider should share our rugs, and that on the first blink of dawn I would send one of my native guides with him to show him the way. The stranger, though very grateful, was obdurate for quite a time. No ! he must get on, he must get on ! At length, however, I prevailed

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—and I do not think that the fact that he was broken with weariness had anything to do with it.

We got him from the saddle—we had literally to lift him, he was so done—and when we had helped him to our tree, and rugged him and fed him and plied him with refreshment, he told us that his name was Winston Churchill, and explained very modestly how he had ridden —almost without rest—for five nights and four days from the Atbara, foundering his own horse and two others that he had commandeered *en route*—he had now a third—in dread lest he might be too late for the great event.

I sent him on at dawn as promised, and, as we know, he played his part in the Lancers' charge, and has lived to make history.

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CHAPTER XII

MORE STORIES

Prince Francis of Teck. His ideal story-teller. Queen Victoria and *Modern Society*. Tullibardine, his popularity. The Cockney soldier and the Gaelic. The bland "Tommy" Townshend. His passion for France and the French; his studies, song, music, and humour. His commands and band. "Up I came with my little lot" and its sequel. The black orderly. Colonel Taffy Lewis. His Egyptian service. "Filloos Bey." A case of Ichabod. "Rawly": kindliest of staff officers. The Sirdar's orders. The camel and the Nile. "Backacher" and his tirelessness, perplexing ways. The General at mess. Improvement stunts. Father Brindle and his flask. His unfailing energy and cheeriness. The desert service. The two B——s. Sir Arthur Sloggett's miraculous escape, its why and wherefore. Frankie Rhodes: the excitement of war—a fine horseman and finer shot. His little flat and Dalham.

BROADWOOD, MAHON, TULLIBARDINE, AND FRANK TECK, a coterie of close friends. In the saddle, all and every day under the merciless sun, on reconnaissance from before dawn till after dark, it seemed to me that they must always be on the verge of complete exhaustion. They were all fined down to a skeleton leanness, but they one and all belied their appearance, and what was left of them was just steel and nerve and grit. That much might, indeed, be said of every one of Kitchener's officers. You don't live in the atmosphere of the hot room of a Turkish bath for years without fining down. But they were all the cheeriest as well as the keenest of souls.

I recall Prince Frank at Berber in 1897. He had already had a long summer of Sudan foraying. Lean as

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a desert Arab—his height, his broad chest, girl's waist, and thin flanks made him ever a conspicuous figure. His fine, good-looking face was thinned to the dimensions of a hatchet. But he was always the most cheerful of men, full of good humour and fun and anecdote. I was talking to him one day of *raconteurs* and *raconteuses*, and mentioned Princess Clementine (the mother of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria), whom I had met a good deal in Sofia, as being—despite her misfortune of almost complete deafness—one of the most brilliant tellers of witty stories about people in the world's eye that I had ever known.

"Well," said the Prince, who had doubtless, if he wished it, known all the best talkers in European society, "for my part I think that the woman with the most wonderful collection of yarns, upon every subject under the sun, was my aunt (the late Duke of Cambridge's wife). She was absolutely unbeatable. She knew everything about everybody." Then—and to this day I don't know whether he meant it or was merely chaffing me—he went on: "What always puzzles me is where do the *Modern Society* people get their information from as to happenings in the royal palaces. It is quite certain that it does not come from anyone in the households. But the quaint point is that it is nearly always correct." Her Majesty (Queen Victoria), he added, had often asked for the paper, and commented on its uncanny knowledge. I know not if this paper is still in existence, but it would seem to have made its mark at one period of its career.

Tullibardine—then quite young—was already as keen and eager and hard-working a soldier as he has ever afterwards proved himself to be. His frank and genial nature, and his constant desire to be helpful to anyone, made him extremely popular. Naturally, when the British Brigades came up the Nile in '98, much of his interests centred upon the Highland battalions, and he

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spent himself in showing countless kindnesses to young soldiers. This sometimes produced quaint situations.

Townshend (Sir Charles of Kut defence fame) used to tell a story of one such occasion. The desert behind one of our camps, south of Berber, was a great place for mirage, which in this case was literally the Mā-el-Kadab, or lying water. Almost daily, over a considerable period, a great lake bordered by trees was to be seen away in the desert, and apparently but a few hundred yards distant.

A favourite joke of old hands—who maybe had themselves been victimized—was to persuade youthful new arrivals to load themselves with the water-bottles of, say, half a company and walk out into the desert to fill them at "the lake," where they were assured the water was sweeter and cooler than in the muddy river. One used often to meet a sturdy youngster, far away from camp, and hung about like a Christmas tree, with wooden and canvas and metal bottles, and maybe with a pail in each hand, stumping sturdily over the rough stones in beaming expectation of the thanks of his pals when he should return to them with clear water. Townshend tells how one day "Bardie" met one of these victims and—doubtless indignant—began to explain the hoax in the Gaelic. The man seemed flabbergasted, and the young Marquis grew more earnest and explanatory. It was all to no avail. At length "Bardie" thought to try English. "Where were you born, man ?" he cried.

"Please, sir," said the soldier, "I come from Limehouse."

Our friends the dervishes were very tough customers. A charging *Ansar*, in the urge of fanaticism, was extremely hard to check, and even when fatally full of lead could often manage to "get" his enemy before he took his own departure for "the gardens of delight."

Thus it came about that many of our officers—those especially who were in constant touch with Mahmoud's

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patrols—provided themselves with pistols of great stopping power. One favourite was the four-barrelled "Lankaster," another was the Bland, an 18-bore, double-barrelled, hammerless, single-trigger pistol that fired fifteen slugs from each brass cartridge.

Tullibardine had one of these—as indeed had I—but for a long time he never had an opportunity to test its efficacy. We used to try them against logs and mud walls, but this was not a real trial, and, as he said, he wanted to "give the thing its fair chance before deciding on its merits."

At length, however, he got his opportunity. He was out on reconnaissance, as usual, and got into quite an awkward scrap with a biggish mounted force, mostly carrying the big-bladed lotus spear (with which, I used to pray, I might never be troubled, as there was not room for it in my body). Describing the incident afterwards to me, he said: "I waited for him to get well up—rather nearer, perhaps, than was safe—and then I let him have it." I asked if he was satisfied. "Yes and no," he said; "but it wasn't a true test, because both barrels went off at once and" (cupping his hands) "blew a hole in the poor chap the size of a soup tureen."

* * * * *

Very many of these gentlemen, whom I have ventured to call "Kitchener's men," have since risen to eminence and distinction, some in quasi-civilian occupation.

Sir Edgar Bernard, who has recently retired from the post of Financial Administrator of the Sudan, was a junior Bimbashi in Tudway's Camel Corps, when I first knew him in '97. Borton, again, became Postmaster-General of Egypt; and there were others who took up and held brilliantly important "civvy" posts.

Of Townshend, of course, we know. When first I

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met "Tommy" Townshend (his name was Charles), at Suakin, in 1884, he was a Subaltern of Marines. Then he went up Nile and across the Bayuda with the Camel Corps. Later on he made that gallant defence of Chitral (that was when my friend and colleague, E. F. Knight, who went up with the relieving column, was given the job of bringing down "fifty kings" as prisoners).

And after Chitral, Townshend returned to his old love, the Sudan, and was given the command of the 10th Sudanese Battalion.

A very earnest soldier, he used to spend all his spare time in a meticulous study of the Napoleonic era and Bonaparte's campaigns (the *petit caporal* was, I think, his military hero), and also to the acquisition of a perfect knowledge of the French language. For the last, of course, he had special reason, for soon after Omdurman he married an extremely charming and wealthy French lady.

Townshend, for all his studies, found time to ripple with fun and merriment and to write and compose innumerable songs, which he sang inimitably, accompanying himself on his "wing-wang"—the banjo that he carried everywhere.

He loved his "old blacks," as he called his men of the 10th, and revelled over their simplicity, their quaint mentality, their weird love adventures, and their appreciation of music—our music, not their own. His black bandsmen used to play all the latest music-hall airs, the little drummer-boys taking a frenzied delight in the slap and bang cadences of the chorus.

After our Atbara fight Townshend told me delightedly how his band—we were played into action in that barbaric war—charged the dervish zareeba playing, "Up I came with my little lot, And the air went blue for miles."

"After that," he said, "they seemed to get confused,

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for they attacked the second stockade to the tune of 'He somehow didn't feel himself at home.'"

"My dear old blacks are a funny lot," said Townshend. "Take my orderly. He was walking beside my stirrup, when suddenly he leapt forward and bayoneted a man right through the body. But that wasn't enough: he bayoneted him again and then again.

"'Bass! Bass!' I cried, 'stop it, that's enough!'

"'Oh no, your Excellency,' he pleaded. 'I must give him another. He's my father!'"

* * * * *

No account of those Sudan comrades would be adequate without mention of Colonel David Lewis, A.D.C., C.B., D.S.O., etc., of the Buffs.

He had, I believe, when I met him in '96, been longer in the Egyptian service than almost any other white officer—save the Sirdar himself—and a very great part of his service had been on the frontier.

When I first knew him he commanded the famous 9th Sudanese (whose boast used to be that they were "Tessaggi bè nimr (9th in number), but awal fil (1st in the army)." This was the battalion, by the way, to which the Cameron Highlanders had presented a replica of their own colours, which was always carried beside the 9th's standard.

Taffy was adored not only by his men, but also by their wives—which, as nearly every Sudanese soldier was married, gave him a great host of worshipping admirers. And all the wives in other battalions were devoted to and swore by him as did those of his own men.

To these people his nickname was "Filloos Bey"—the money Colonel—gained for him by his constant generosity towards these "old black ladies." I often rode with him through the married quarters' camps, where

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our horses were immediately surrounded by a densely packed mob of girls, women, and children, of every shade of blackness and chocolate brown, who crowded around, caressing his horse, touching his knees timidly, and jabbering —all at once—their needs and their troubles, in the sure hope that " Filloos Bey " would help them.

Lewis was a very fine horseman and took great pride in his cattle. He and Colonel Burn Murdoch, who then commanded the Gyppy Cavalry, were in constant friendly rivalry in regard to their acquisitions in the shape of horseflesh.

Taffy was a small man, and proud of the distinction. His first greeting to me was: " Mr. Scudamore, I have flattered myself for years that I was the smallest white man in the Sudan. But since you reached railhead, I am told that it is a case of *Ichabod*—my glory is departed. Back to back, sir, if you don't mind, and let's see who wins."

As a matter of fact I won. Taffy was nearly half an inch the taller.

For now a good many years past Colonel Lewis has been able to gratify to the full his equestrian tastes. He hunts throughout the whole of each season with one or other, or with several at a time, of the most famous packs in the shires.

* * * * *

I suppose, although they were not in the Egyptian Service, that since the Sirdar was Commander-in-Chief of the whole expeditionary force, I can apply the name of Kitchener's men to the distinguished officers of British forces who served under him. Rawlinson, Gatacre, Gleichen, Wauchope, Maxse, Arthur Sloggett, and a host of others, among whom must be included Frank Rhodes and Father Brindle—all were Kitchener's men.

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"Rawly" (I trust he will forgive the seeming impertinence to a Peer and Commander-in-Chief in India) was a very quiet man, a desperate worker, and a very earnest soldier. At the same time, he was intensely human, and had nothing in him of the supercilious and sneering staff manner that is occasionally met with. On several occasions, indeed, he stood nobly between me and the impending wrath of the Sirdar. Once I recall—it was really a laughable business, but it certainly might have wrecked Kitchener's plans—was on a night that preceded one of our scraps with the dervishes. We had reached, after nightfall, a position within about 3,000 yards of the dervishes, whom we were to attack before dawn. It was a black night, and the strictest orders had been issued that there must be no lights, no fires, not even a match must be struck or the glow of a cigarette showing; and, above all, there must be complete silence. Even on the stern wheeler where the Sirdar had his quarters all was black and quiet. The mandate was, of course, obeyed, and everything went well, until some short time after midnight a terrific uproar roused the whole camp. Loud cries, frenzied ejaculations—calls shouted by Ali to Bakheet and resented with furious objurgations—all at the top pitch of raucous Arab accents—filled the air. And then a moment afterwards there followed the well-known chantey of the Nile boatmen, shouted by some thirty men. "Hoop ya ragil, hoop bel Affia—hoop hèli Hèli; hoop bel Nèbi Sagh!" (Haul man! haul with your strength! haul like the prophet himself.) This repeated again and again until the night air rang with the noise.

And the trouble was that this disturbance of quiet, this thwarting of plans, came from a spot on the high river bank where most of the correspondents were uncomfortably bivouacked.

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I was not among them—as it chanced—but I hurried to the spot, and quickly found what had happened.

A camel belonging to one of my colleagues had fallen into the river, and all the camp servants had zealously lent aid to rescue the beast, and having reeved a rope round its neck, were striving to haul the great brute bodily up the steep 10-foot bank.

I strove to stop the noise.

Then out of the darkness came a very quiet staff officer —Rawly—with a shaded lantern.

"What in the name of heaven is all this about?" he asked in a whisper.

I explained—the owner of the delinquent camel had discreetly remained *doggo*—and only Knight and I were in evidence.

"Your animal?" he asked, when I'd finished. I told him I did not know to whom it belonged.

"Oh, well," said Rawlinson, "the General's mad, and threatens to send all the correspondents down the river at once, but don't worry. I'll fix it—you shan't hear anything more about the affair."

* * * * *

Sir William Gatacre—"Backacher" was his name in the army, and in some ways I think he earned it—for he certainly drove the men under him with a ruthless energy that no regimental or sergeant-major ever surpassed—was himself a tireless man, though he always looked as though sinking from exhaustion. Certainly he never spared himself in the Sudan, as I believe he had never spared himself in his thirty-five years' service in India.

But he was a perplexing man to deal with, and some of his ways were trying even to those of the higher command who were—or sought to be—in constant touch with him. I recall for instance how on one occasion when an urgent

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council of leaders was called (to decide on some immediate plan of action), all the members of the Sirdar's staff sought high and low throughout our Atbara Camp for General Gatacre, whose presence, since he commanded the British Brigade, was very necessary to the discussion. He was nowhere to be found. Hours passed, and still no Gatacre, until genuine fear was aroused lest he had fallen into the Nile and been drowned. At length one of the eager searchers, who had wandered far afield, met on the outskirts of the camp a mud-stained, dust-choked subaltern who, quite down and out, was staggering back to his quarters.

"Backacher," said the weary one, in reply to the inevitable question. "Oh, yes—he's out there in the sun—'learning cruties' to dig latrines."

A most generous and kindly man—he made me at one time an honorary member of his mess, where one met as a rule Father Brindle (later Bishop Brindle of Nottingham) and Colonel Frank Rhodes (Cecil's elder brother).

The General was never on any single occasion present when dinner was served, and the order of the day was never to wait for him. We would be half-way through our meal when the General came in, accompanied by Brooke, the handsome A.D.C., who, even more tireless than his chief, looked after him like a stalwart nurse.

The General would give a few greetings in a weary voice, and after a few spoonfuls of soup would push his plate aside, lay his head on his folded arms, and go to sleep. The countersign was to take no notice, and our talk would continue until it was time to go to bed.

Then, as we rose, saying good-night, Sir William would open his eyes.

"Brooke, Brooke!" he would say, "we seem to have spent a long time over dinner. But it's pleasant—very pleasant. Well! now let us go round the lines and see if anyone is sleeping with his boots off."

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That was his fad—all the officers and men of his forces must sleep in their boots. It made him temporarily unpopular, and I have heard the planning of the most dreadful plots trammelled (among subalterns), which, of course, never came to anything—for mistaking him for a camp robber (when he turned up their blankets) and dealing with him accordingly.

* * * * *

I recall how, going up the Nile for Omdurman, Gatacre, who was ever solicitous for the welfare and improvement of his men (despite his hard discipline), had made arrangements for a visit by them to the famous Edfou Temple, an hour's ride out in the desert. Now, the Tommy of those days, stalwart and heroic fighter as he was, the world's best, had a complete indifference to his surroundings, and the General's idea of a pleasurable and instructive afternoon left him cold.

"Collins," said Sir William to his servant, "there'll be donkeys for the ride and luncheon at the Temple, and I hope you will have a most enjoyable afternoon."

But Collins was not for it, and his attitude, I think, expressed that of the whole detachment.

"Thank you, sir," he said, "but I don't want no Pyramids nor yet no Spynkses, and besides I've got a little washing to do."

This is, I think, typical of the British soldier in "furrin parts."

The marvels of Saint Sophia, the wonderful picture of the Golden Horn, the jewelled palaces of the Bosphorus shore, the wonders of the Pyramids and temples of ancient Egypt, even the glories of the Taj Mahal in India, leave him cold and indifferent. But General Gatacre would never let a chance escape to "improve" his men.

With Father Brindle, my acquaintance—nay, it was

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much more—spread over many years. My first vivid recollection of him is when in the hottest time of our Tamai fight (March 1884) I found him suddenly beside my horse with his hand on my knee. "My boy," he said, "have you any brandy or whisky?"

"Certainly, Father," I cried (I carried flasks in my holsters), "have which you will."

"It's not for me, Scudamore," he said, with a gentle smile of deprecation. "There's a poor fellow here who is just going. He asks me to write him a letter home, and I think a drop of spirits may give him strength to send his message."

Some hours later, as I sat on a hummock of rock, writing my *Times* telegrams, I saw the Father hurrying towards me.

"Scudamore," he cried, "I've been looking for you for an hour. I've lost your flask—it was knocked out of my hand—but I've got this for you," and he handed me a soda water bottle filled with whisky. Nor would he hear my reproaches that he should have remembered such a matter. "No! no!" he cried. "You've got your work to do—and we want you to do it well."

In all the fights in which I have seen him take part I have never known Father Brindle to ride a horse. Indeed, I cannot recall ever having seen him on horseback in all the years I knew him. On our Sudan fighting days he used to walk in front of the forces as we marched out to action, just behind the standard bearers, clad ever in immaculate white drill (we wondered how he managed it) and reading his breviary. And during the fight itself he would be here, there, and everywhere—giving comfort and aid and encouragement to wounded men. He was a most popular priest. In standing camp, on Sundays, not only those of his own communion used to attend his services, but men who "followed the band" and others

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of other denominations flocked to hear his brief pithy discourses. He was always to the point and never bored his audience.

I recall how when the Desert Column—under Redvers Buller (for Sir Herbert Stewart had been mortally wounded)—marched back across the Bayuda, after the fall of Khartoum, the half-way station of Gakdul (where Stewart was buried) was reached in the dawning of the first day of Lent. The enemy was fairly subdued. Tudway with his mounted corps was out in the low hills. It was a quiet day.

Father Brindle seized his opportunity and asked permission of General Buller to hold a service for any who chose to attend.

The word was sent round, and men hurried from all quarters to the spot where the Father had spread his altar cloth over a couple of biscuit boxes.

When the brief service drew to its close, Father Brindle held up his hand.

"Men," he said, "we are all tired and I won't keep you, but before we separate I want to say a few words. This is the first day of Lent, a time when a vow of abstinence is very acceptable to Our Lady. Now, I'm not going to ask you to abstain from meat or drink. You don't get enough of the first and far too little of the second. But you can still make a sacrifice that will be grateful.

"The language of this force since we left Korti has been shocking beyond expression. I grant you that the camel is a trying companion, and no doubt association with the brute is demoralizing. But there can be no excuse for the senseless expletives with which you befoul every sentence you speak on all occasions. You know what I mean. Those two B——s. I won't defile this altar by speaking them. Well, men, it's only a habit, and if you will take thought you can give it up. Make a vow

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that you won't use those two B——s for a week—and then carry on for a fortnight. By Easter you'll be able to talk with clean tongues, and, believe me, this will be a most acceptable oblation."

As the congregation dispersed (I was told this, for I was not present), two ragged, dust-grimed, mothy-bearded soldiers were talking earnestly about Father Brindle's discourse.

"When all's said and done, Jumbo," said one, "there's a B——y lot of truth in what the old B—— says about this swearing."

General Sir Arthur Sloggett, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., etc., who until near the end of the World War was Director-General of the British Army Medical Service, was also one of Kitchener's men in the last phase of our three years' campaign for the reconquest of the Sudan.

Sloggett was always one of the most popular figures in Cairo society, where his service held him for a number of years, and innumerable stories might be told of him. I will, however, content myself with one only. It has a peculiar interest because I believe that, until the Great War, when anything and everything happened, his case was almost unique in the annals of medical history. Generally, if a man was shot through the heart there was nothing more to be said. But Sir Arthur was shot through the heart at Omdurman and recovered. All the circumstances connected with that wound are so peculiar that they are well worth telling.

As we advanced across the desert in our second fight at Omdurman (we had three that day), I chanced for the time to be riding behind the Sirdar, with some of his staff. Sloggett was a few yards in front of me—next following Kitchener in fact. There was a brisk fire from the enemy, coming from several quarters at once. Suddenly Sir Arthur gave a slight scream and fell from his horse.

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He was taken back to the Nile, where we had a number of hospital ships, and when the officer who accompanied the bearer party returned he reported, in reply to Kitchener's anxious inquiries, that the popular Hakim had been "shot through the heart and was just at his last breath."

Now this would be a very ordinary story, but Sloggett's luck was something quite out of the common. He recovered and quite quickly. Less than a month later, when on arrival in Cairo from the front I sent an anxious inquiry to Lady Sloggett as to her husband's condition, I received a cheery note from the wounded man, telling me that he would be down to breakfast in half an hour, and admonishing me to hurry up.

This was what had happened. There is, I am told, a spot in the human heart that may be pierced by a very slim instrument without causing death, but an ordinary bullet would be likely to exceed the dimensions within which lay potential immunity.

And herein lay Sloggett's good fortune. The missile that struck him was fired from a weapon that would not have been in dervish hands but for the disaster of two armies. It had been taken from the Abyssinians when Abdullahi defeated King Menelik, and it had been previously taken by the Abyssinians from the Italians at Adowa. At that time the Italian service rifle fired the slimmest bullet used in the world's armies. It was Sloggett's luck that this was his packet.

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And Colonel Rhodes—of the Royals—elder brother to the "Colossus" of Africa, and best of good fellows. Well, Frankie—albeit a non-combatant officially—was certainly one of Kitchener's men in the sense that he was a close friend of the Sirdar, and was always with

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him in the Sudan and elsewhere when any fighting was toward.

I once heard a man ask the Colonel—we were lunching with the Sirdar—why he came out to this "beastly country," when he was a rich man and could command every happiness and pleasure that the world could provide.

"Well," said Rhodes lazily, "I sometimes wonder myself. But I suppose I like the excitement."

It must have been so, for he spent much of his leave as the guest of commanders of expeditions, and was at all times a "standing dish" in Sudan fighting.

I met him first in the Osman Digna business in '84, when the old blue serge suit that he wore at Omdurman in '98 was probably nearly new. It had surely seen a lot of service between whiles.

I think I may say that from that time on, until he last went out to Africa to die of blackwater fever, we were friends. Kindly, amiable, placid, and contented with everything, Frank Rhodes was one of the sweetest-natured men I have ever met.

He was, of course, a fine horseman and certainly a very fine shot. I have often lain beside him on the bank of the Nile and the Atbara while he waited to get a shot at a crocodile. They are tricky beasts to hit, because there are so few rifts in their armour which are vulnerable —the eye is, of course, the surest, the soft uncarapaced underside of the forearm the next.

"Wait a bit," Rhodes would say (after a careful shot which had made Mr. Timsah whiz round like a dragon fly and disappear under water), "let's see if he rises. If he comes at once to the surface we'll know we've got him. Otherwise he'll swim three miles down-stream under water and then come up to sun himself on a mud bank and laugh derision at us."

And as often as not that was what happened, and next

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morning we would hear that the crocodile—his appetite whetted by exercise—had snaffled a black baby off the bank.

Rhodes got a bullet in the shoulder at Omdurman, and Lord Cromer, solicitous, wired to him from Cairo, "Shall I send you a nurse?"

"By all means," was Frankie's answer, "send the prettiest you can find."

I only once saw him disturbed—and then it was not much.

He had wired to me to breakfast with him in his flat at 17, Stratton Street, where he lived above Sir Henry Irving. It was soon after the death of his brother Cecil, and the Colonel had just taken possession of the Dalham Hall estate which he had inherited.

I found him seated at a library desk surrounded by masses of documents.

"Look here," he cried, "what am I to do with this? I'm sure Cecil can never have seen this property before he bought it. I've been down there, my dear Scudie, and I swear to you that the place is dropping to pieces. You can't cough in any room but the walls shake. And look at this estimate my agent has sent me for fences—all he says absolutely necessary."

He turned round. "I don't like being a man of property," he said. "When I had just five or six thousand a year, I was perfectly happy. I could roam about, and I had this little flat to come to when I wished."

"This little flat," by the way, was not so small, as may be judged by its spacious hall. Against one wall was a glass case showing a lion and lioness—both shot by Rhodes. In a corner stood a stuffed hartebeest, and various other great specimens of African deer were also present—yet crowded nothing. It was a commodious "little flat."

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CHAPTER XIII

"FIGHTING MAC"

I meet Macdonald. His hospitality and his hatred of the Press. Knight and I given permission to be with him at Firket. His gallantry in action. Cholera and his command. His care of his "old blacks." The crown of his career.

THE TRAIN STOPPED at the "nuzzle" or "dumping-down place" where the rails tailed off a hundred yards into the sand and ceased. It was near sunset, and there reigned throughout the little camp that lay beside the line that feverish activity which was the harbinger of the coming restfulness of night. The camels, each with one foreleg bound up to its shoulder, were hopping and hobbling back from the watering-place; the evening barley was being fed out in the horse lines; the black drummer-boys were briskly rattling out their last half-hour of practice; the odour of cook-pots filled the shimmering air; and in front of an old and ragged E.P. tent there sat on a biscuit-box the commander of the advance-guard of the Sirdar's army. The time was early in 1896. The place was some five and thirty miles south of Wady Halfa —then the frontier of the Khedive's possessions; the man was Hector Macdonald, and this was my first introduction to him. I have called him the leader of the advance-guard; but this, indeed, he always was throughout the whole of the three years of fighting for the reconquest of the Sudan. Whenever a fresh move was made to the southward—and, of course, we seldom moved north at

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any time—it was the Sudanese battalions that were employed, and it was Macdonald who led them. I shall not easily forget my first impressions of the man who welcomed me to a share of the biscuit-box, his only article of furniture. Of middle height, very broad-shouldered, very clean knit, very trim (as all good soldiers are) as to his boots and gaiters, with a broad square head close cropped, eyes so keen that their steely glance seemed to read one's inmost thoughts, a jaw and chin in which purposeful determination was clearly written, and a smile so winning that when his white and perfect teeth showed beneath the closely trimmed moustache the whole face was lit up as by a sunbeam. He had, of course, been out and hard at work since four that morning, reconnoitring the fastnesses of the "Batt'n-el-Hagg'r" or "Belly of Rock," where the dervish outposts lurked a few miles ahead in hidden safety; inspecting the constantly shifting camp of the construction party, with its host of ragged followers; making arrangements for the fitting out of the "nuggers" and "gayassas" that at this time formed our sole fleet above the Second Cataract; receiving and preparing for the reception of stores, ammunition, telegraph wires and poles, and all the thousand necessaries of the forthcoming expedition; and attending in the intervals of these and other manifold and active occupations to a hundred varied details of his onerous command. In all rightfulness the man should have been tired, dirty, short in the temper even—it was the evening heritage of most toilers in the Sudan—but he was none of these things; but brisk, alert, cheerful, and as neat as when he had ridden forth at dawn to look for Osman Azrak. What chiefly filled his mind, as his greeting amply indicated, was complete and absorbing delight at the prospect of the hard work and the hard blows in store for him, to which soldierly joys he had been looking forward with

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eagerness throughout all the years of his sojourn on the frontier.

Once acquainted, it was but natural to seek out Macdonald on every occasion when the Sirdar loosed for a little the string by which he bound the fluttering correspondents to his headquarters' camp, and permitted an all-too-brief excursion to the farthest outposts of the army. My reception on each of these visits was unvaryingly delightful, and the Bey—as Macdonald then was—unfailingly kindly, hospitable, and helpful—helpful, I should say, to the man, but not at all to the correspondent. From a newspaper point of view, indeed, a brick wall would have been more communicative than "Fighting Mac," and on those few occasions when the office fell to his lot he was a "very terror" of a press censor. He was, however, always ready to offer the hospitality of his fighting-ground. The night before the battle of Firket—in which for the first time, be it remembered, we crossed swords with the Khalifa's emirs—Knight (of *The Times*) and I sought out Macdonald Bey, who, naturally, was to command the Sudanese Brigade, and begged permission to accompany his force in the morrow's engagement. Having regard to his known dislike of pressmen as pressmen, we were somewhat afraid that our request might be refused; and in view of the fact that the hottest corner—the place of honour—was that assigned to the black battalions, a refusal would have been very prejudicial to the interests of our several journals. But Macdonald was delighted. "Come with me," he said, "and welcome, and I'll show you all the fun of the fair"; and I need hardly say that he was as good as his word. Our Firket battleground lay under the lee of a cliff-like mountain-side, which rose on our left flank, while on our right flowed the sluggish green waters of the Nile. The face of the cliff was pierced here and there with caves, and in these

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improvised sungas were bands of dervish riflemen. From cliff to river ran several deep and ragged Khors, in which were massed the dervish forces, while along the river bank the mud village stretched for nigh a mile. Macdonald's task was to dislodge the rifle bands in the cliffs, to clear the Khors, to outflank the enemy when onee broken, to turn him, and thus put flight out of the question, and to drive him down upon the river bank and under the cross-fire of the Egyptian Brigade. And right nobly he performed his mission. I can almost see him now, as I write, helmet in hand, waving on his men, leaping his horse, until it was shot under him, from ledge to ledge down the rugged, crumbling sides of the ravines, where every rock sheltered a dervish fanatic, whose only purpose and desire was to kill and be killed; and never shall I forget the frenzied cheer of the gallant blacks, which he led off himself, when at length, his eyes shining, his whole face glowing with delighted enthusiasm and pride at the good work done, he turned and shouted: "Hurrah! hurrah! We've got them on the run."

But if "Mac" was in his element when face to face with the enemy, he was equally at home, and equally able to show his mastery over men, when battling against that no less formidable, and even more cruel, foe, disease. During the months that followed the fight at Firket, and pending the flood of the Nile that should permit us to push on to Dongola, that year our goal, our camps were scourged with an epidemic of cholera of a peculiarly virulent and deadly type. And, as always happens with the Sudanese peoples in cases of epidemics, it was the black troops that suffered the most severely. An appalling characteristic of the form of the disease—*cholera secca*—that smote us was that recovery was almost unknown. Day by day, from out the lines of the black battalions, the bearer parties bore long strings of stretchers with

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fresh victims to the isolated cholera hospital; and, as his comrades watched each blanket-covered form vanish from their midst, they instinctively bade the sufferer a final farewell. The Sudanese, who are as children, are devoted in their friendships, and it was not long before a feeling of hopeless despair had taken possession of the black camps. To make matters worse, the army was perforce idle during those months; the troops had not that stimulus of hard work to raise them out of themselves, nor was it easy to provide them with any form of recreation. Naturally the cleanliest people in the world, it was necessary to wholly prohibit bathing: the men were not, indeed, permitted to approach the river at all; and when this cruel privation, whose meaning they could not at all understand, was first imposed on them, it went very nigh to raising a mutiny. Every British officer with the force—there were less than a hundred—had his work cut out for him in those days; and for no one among them was the task harder than that which circumstances imposed on Macdonald. His "old blacks" had no fear of death if it came in the forms they knew, but their shrinking despair of the dread "chota," their ignorant and fanatical belief that when they were taken to hospital it was merely to be poisoned, and their consequent growing mistrust of the leaders, who, as they misreasoned, thus sacrificed them, increased day by day, and it taxed every faculty of resourcefulness, of kindly tact, and of unflinching disciplinary firmness that Macdonald could call to his command to keep the innate savagery of his men in check and avoid grave disaster. But in this cruel "peace war," as in his happy hours of battle, the indomitable energy and unquenchable cheeriness of the man proudly triumphed; and when the breath of the destroyer had ceased to blight our army of the desert, and the light of hope shone once more amongst us, it found his black

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troops only more devoted than ever to their honoured Bey.

The battles of the Atbara and of Omdurman may, I think, be described as the crowning triumphs of Macdonald's career. That they were amongst the brightest jewels in the "fame crown" of his chief will not be disputed, and that Macdonald largely contributed to place them there is unquestionable. At the Atbara, which was in every sense of the word a soldier's battle, Macdonald's brigade was conspicuously successful. All the troops fought well, and it would be invidious to assign greater measure of praise to any one portion of the force than to the rest. It is, however, incontestable that the two men who first got at the enemy in that magnificent rush at Mahmoud's zareeba were the two Scotch officers, Sir Archibald Hunter and Hector Macdonald. Hunter, of course, was first, but then he was divisional commander, and it was his privilege to lead the Khedive's troops into action; but Macdonald was immediately behind him, and it was his brigade on the right wing, as it was the British troops under Gatacre on the left, that took the chief part in clearing the death-belching trenches with which the whole two miles of the dervish position were honeycombed.

In the final advance on Omdurman Macdonald's brigade, as usual, were the first troops to be sent forward from the Atbara fort to form and hold an outpost camp in which might be stored the immense supplies of war material necessary for the ultimate overthrow of the Khalifa. He always, as he put it himself, had the privilege of "smelling out Abdullahi before anybody else." He was always in touch with the dervish, and had generally exchanged shots with him in skirmish or reconnaissance while the rest of the army was still of necessity many miles in the rear. He always, in fact, held the post of

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honour, a privilege which, in a wholly friendly spirit, was hugely envied him. Thus in what was the signal and chiefest triumph of his brilliant career, the Battle of Omdurman, the post of honour was again his, and nobly did he justify his right to that proud position. When our zareeba fight that morning was over, when the two big armies (led by the Khalifa and his brother Yacoub) which had attacked our front, charging down upon our lines, had been repulsed and had sullenly withdrawn out of shot, Lord Kitchener decided to advance at once upon Omdurman. He knew, everyone knew, that on our extreme right and behind the ridges of Kerreri Mountain was a dervish force of some 15,000 men under the Emir Ali Wad Héllu, men fresh and unblooded, who had not yet been in an action or even shot over, except by the gunboats in mid-Nile. But the Sirdar's object was to reach Omdurman before the retreating enemy. He knew that should the Khalifa and his followers once get back to his stronghold it would cost us many days of fierce fighting and a terribly heavy death-roll ere we could hope to overmaster him in the labyrinthine streets and alleys of that vast city. It must, therefore, have been with full knowledge that the Sirdar assigned to Macdonald the honour of standing as bulwark between the advancing army and Ali Wad Héllu's inevitable attack. The advance was made in echelon of brigades, and Macdonald's was the rear brigade, and therefore farthest out in the open plain, and nearest to Wad Héllu's sheltered army. Macdonald knew full well what he must expect, and was quite prepared for it. He moved quickly to the best available fighting ground, formed up his men in that time-honoured Sudan square that had served so well and so often before, and awaited the onslaught. It came, and it may be said at once that, cool as he was, and joyous as were his indurated "old blacks" at the prospect of a

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real private fight—enriched with the most bloodsome potentialities of hand-to-hand conflict—the fierce and prolonged struggle that ensued taxed to the very utmost the nerves and fine discipline of the men and the resource and watchfulness of their invincible commander. So hot and persistent, indeed, was Wad Héllu's attack, so constantly recurrent and heroically persevering the rushes of his bands of brave fanatics, that several times the dervishes were at grips with the troops, and when at last, hopelessly beaten and their leader slain, the Schadieh and the Ansari slowly and sullenly withdrew, baffled, yet not acknowledging defeat, the ammunition boxes of Macdonald's force held not more than ten rounds per man.

This was indeed Macdonald's happy hour, the hard-earned, well-merited triumph of his life of valiant soldiering.

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CHAPTER XIV

I GO TO ERZEROUM

I am ordered to investigate. Refused permission to travel by the Grand Vizier. Proceed against the Sultan's orders. Trebizond and Longworth's help. I pass the gates. The mountain passes. The Han. Erzeroum at last.

A WAR CORRESPONDENT cannot always be engaged in warfare, for the simple but efficient reason that even for the catholic tastes of Britishers there are not always enough campaigns to go round. But in the piping times of peace—miscalled so far as he is concerned—the editor, aided by that other power, who shall be nameless, generally finds some work for the "special's" hands.

Thus in January 1895 I was given the mission to investigate on the spot the truth of the stories of dreadful atrocities by Turks on the Armenian villagers of the Sassun region in the highlands of Asia Minor, an employ which occasioned me nigh a year's sojourn in Armenia, in the interests of the *Daily News*. Those who know the Turks and their methods will readily understand that the task was no easy one. With its difficulties, however, my editor and manager were in no way concerned. For, as is by this time well understood by the reading public, it is for the manager to command and for the "special" to obey, and should the latter lose his life in the attempt at compliance, his unhappy demise provides an apt occasion for eulogy—in his obituary notice—of the splendid "enterprise" of the proprietors.

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This, however, is by the way. My orders received, I started immediately for Constantinople by the Ostend–Vienna *train de luxe*, and after a broken journey (for we were snowed up two days in Vienna and all traffic was suspended), reached the Sultan's capital on the 5th of January, and, in view of the difficulties and restrictions which I knew by long experience would be raised by the Turkish authorities against my journey to the seat of the disturbances, determined to take the bull by the horns, and attack no less a person than the Grand Vizier himself on the subject of my mission. Accordingly, on the morning following my arrival, I set forth from the "Pera Palace Hotel" in a well-equipped victoria (with a trim "Nubian Mesrour" on the box beside the coachman, for display, be it known, counts as much in Turkey as elsewhere), and drove to His Highness Djevad Pasha's Palace at Shishli in the immediate precincts of Yildiz, where Sultan Abdul Hamid obliged his Cabinet Ministers to reside. Of course, when I sent up my card, it was touch and go whether His Highness would receive me, for interviews with Prime Ministers are not as a rule more easily obtained in Turkey than in more Western countries. *But he did*, thanks, I must think, to the representations of "Mesrour," and I was at once ushered up to a long saloon, furnished, in the main, with innumerable presentation clocks and ink-stands where the *Sadrazam* awaited me obviously in some perplexity. Our conversation, I may say at once, was not a long one. The Turks are the most courteous people in the world, and the Pasha was suavity personified in the earlier stages of our talk. I made my plea in all frankness. What I wished, I said, was to go up into the Sassun Mountains—scene of the alleged atrocities—there to glean the evidence that should once for all refute the charges made against the Sultan's officers, and thus reblazon the scutcheon of Turkey's now

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tarnished humanity in the eyes of the great British public. No reasonableness on my part, however, could make His Highness see eye to eye with me in the matter.

"It was bitter cold," he argued, "and there were no roads, no hotels, no food, or comforts, or accommodation for travellers, in all the Armenian highlands, at such a season, and he could not sanction the suffering to which I must be put, should I attempt the proposed journey." And when I insisted, His Highness grew irritable, and when I politely demurred to avail myself of the cooked-up reports of local authorities which he kindly offered to place at my disposal, and insinuated that my readers would distrust them, he became angry and even rude. "His Majesty the Sultan," he said, "was determined that Sassun should not be a *bazaar of correspondents*, and he had given special orders that no 'special' should be permitted to land on the Asia Minor Coast. No, I should not go, and would be stopped, arrested, and brought back to Constantinople if I attempted to proceed on my enterprise." There was after this nothing more to be said, and when His Highness and I parted, our relations, though still courteous, were what is diplomatically termed "strained," and I pondered deeply on my way back to the hotel. The gravamen of the Vizirial decision lay in the fact that no one—Turkish subject or alien—may travel in Asiatic Turkey without a sealed permit and a military escort, and this rule is given ample efficiency by reason that the Ottoman authorities simply and blandly decline to recognize the existence of any person who infringes it. I had, therefore, to reconstruct my programme, and, in view of possible contingencies, to do so with the briefest delay. I decided, after a brief talk with friends, to take ship to Batoum—the nearest Black Sea port of the Caucasus—and making my way thence, first to Tiflis and then to Etzmiadzin, at the foot of Mount Ararat, to get

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myself smuggled by devious ways into the Armenian province of Erzeroum. The project was replete with dangers, but, inasmuch as I must in any case contravene Turkish authority if I hoped to succeed, these dangers appeared no greater than any other potential risks, and, after all, were, as the phrase goes, all in the day's work.

Behold me then on a Black Sea steamer with servant, baggage, weapons, tents and "what not," starting at four o'clock that same afternoon. Of course we had snowstorms and rough weather, but four days later saw us at anchor, and in shelter under the white-capped heights of the little port of Trebizond, where my vessel had cargo to discharge. Here as British Consul, I had learned, was an old friend, Mr. Longworth, whom I had not seen since the far-away days of the Russo-Turkish War, and, as we had some hours to stay in the port, I went ashore to visit him. For a good many years past it had been my fate on arrival at any place outside the ordinary tourist routes to be saluted with the exclamation: "Hullo, is there going to be war?" Nor in this case was the phrase in default, and, of course, I at once told my mission and my plans.

Longworth pondered awhile after I had finished, and then delivered himself: "I think," he said, "that if you like to take the risks, I can smuggle you out of this town to-night. Of course, you cannot have an escort, but the weather, fortunately, is very bad, and there will be little to tempt brigands abroad. Equally, of course, I shall have to tell the Governor of the province to-morrow that you have started from Trebizond, but I will try to persuade him to leave the question of your arrest to the Governor-General of Erzeroum. By this means, if we are both successful, you will only be imprisoned when you are more than half-way towards your proposed destination, and that is always this much of an advantage that it

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leaves time for argument." It need hardly be said that I accepted this offer. Longworth sent on board the steamer for my revolver and a little necessary clothing—my servant and the rest of my equipment I have never seen from that day to this—and busied himself about the needful preparations for my journey—a journey of from seven to nine days in the bleakest winter, across some of the coldest country in the world—to such good purpose, that by midnight I was ready to leave the stronghold of his friendly roof and start on my expedition.

A Turkish proverb has it that " the hair does not grow on the palm of the hand," and, fortunately for me and others in like case, there is comfort and truth in the adage.

At three o'clock on that cold, dark January morning, I set forth from my friend's house in a *paiton*—we should say a victoria—drawn by four horses harnessed abreast, for the Erzeroum gate of the walled town of Trebizond.

I was equipped with the needful stores of food, a lamp, a charcoal stove, a coil of stout rope, and other oddments, and I had with me as an escort my friend's two sportsmen and all the dogs of the household. The town was all asleep, and, as the barking of dogs disturbs no one in Turkish cities, our progress to the gate elicited no comment. Arrived there, however, we were given pause. The gates of course were closed, and the young sub-lieutenant, called by the sergeant of the guard, demanded my passport and my travelling permit, with neither of which documents was I provided. I fumbled, however, in the pockets of my heavy fur coat, and pulled forth a paper which the officer examined. It chanced that this document was the programme of the " Ronacher Theatre " in Vienna, where I had spent an evening—an ornate document rich with gold and red lettering. This my officer examined every way, and finally returned, saying that he feared

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he must "Summon the Major, who knew European languages."

I had, however, heard a musical tinkling as of silver from the corner where my sportsmen stood talking with the sentries, and this gave me the clue. Seizing as many gold pieces as my fingers could clutch in my waistcoat pocket, I placed them in my lieutenant's hands, protesting against the slumbers of that dangerous superior being in any way disturbed on my account. And immediately the magic words were spoken: "Atch Capou" (which is the modern for "Open Sesame"), yelled the *Sous-officier*, and the great gate swung back, my *shikaris* leapt on the carriage step, and the dogs barked joyously, and the eager little horses sprang forward, and our first difficulty was at an end. For half a mile we advanced at an orderly pace, and there my good friends, bidding me a hasty farewell and God-speed, left me nigh a little hamlet where they proposed to pass the remainder of the night, and Ahmet (my driver) and I began in earnest our long journey across the mountains.

In sheltered Trebizond, under a bright sun, it hardly seemed like winter, but now, even in the low foot-hills, the cold was bitter and grew more and more intense with every mile we made into the snow-clad mountain range, and soon after dawn snow began to fall heavily—a fall which continued, with varying severity, during the whole six days of my tiring drive. In a sense, however, this was an advantage to me, for ere long the weather became so bad that, as Ahmet naïvely put it, even the brigands were certain to stay at home. All that day, indeed, we saw no one, and when at dusk we came to a village where, in ordinary circumstances, we should have passed the night, I persuaded my man—so fearful was I of arrest—to gallop through it at full speed, a proceeding he could in no way understand. But, indeed, all my actions

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must have been extravagant to him, and his round eyes grew wider and the expression of his ruddy face more troubled with each passing hour.

That night we spent on the road, finding, fortunately, a sort of niche in the rocks that gave us at least some shelter from the biting wind. It was cold work, however, so cold that we would have journeyed on but for the need of resting the horses, no relays being anywhere available. Moreover, throughout the whole of the trip the road was bad, and, in the dark, highly dangerous. It had been a grand road once, admirably constructed by French engineers (forty years back), who had carved a wide track out of the mountain side, so that on one side a snow-clad pine-grown wall towered above us, while on the other a precipice fell sheer and clean some 600 feet down to a frozen river. It was a road that required much care, and, needless to say, had received none, with the result that in some places the mountain had slid down upon it, and in others had fallen away from it, and very careful steering was wanted to avoid disaster. Towards the close of the second day our dreary monotony was broken by a diversion.

We were drawing near a large village, when, of a sudden, the sound of rifle-fire rang crisp and sharp in the clear air. One shot at first, and then many others—a mimic battle, as it seemed. "Brigands?" I queried, but Ahmet shook his head. "No," he said, "the Haiduts would never harm the villagers. It must be a smuggling fray." And so it was. All the peasantry in Asia Minor are tobacco smugglers, and pitched battles are not infrequent between the entire community of a village and their sworn enemies, the *coljis*, the agents of the state monopoly, whose duty it is to make raids in force on any place to which their suspicions have been directed. A good deal of blood is sometimes shed on these occasions. On

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approach we found the *coljis* and gendarmes in the roadway sheltered by the houses, while the smugglers were dotted here and there about the hillside, taking cover behind friendly bushes and rising to fire whenever one of the enemy exposed himself. Quite a brisk engagement was in progress, but I dared not linger to watch it less attention should be drawn to myself. And Ahmet, despite disappointment, rose nobly to the occasion. Lashing his horses into a wild gallop, he yelled in commanding tones to the combatants to cease firing, as "His Excellency"—meaning me—wished to pass, and was in a great hurry. And to my surprise he was obeyed. There was an instant silence. We dashed forward, and had wellnigh cleared the village when a shot rang out, followed by a volley from both sides. Someone had incautiously exposed himself, and the temptation had, I supposed, been irresistible. We had the luck with us, however, for, though a bullet tore the hood of the *paiton*, no worse befell us, though I will confess I trembled for the horses, and Ahmet's curses were loud and bitter as we left the village and the battle behind us.

My great desire was to avoid all towns having telegraphic communication with Trebizond, and, if possible, even the big villages where gendarmerie were quartered, and my endeavours to this end much increased our discomforts and greatly exercised the faithful Ahmet. We must needs cross two mountain passes—one 9,000 feet and the second 11,000 feet above the sea—before descending into the Erzeroum plain itself, near 7,000 feet above sea-level, and the road in these dangerous places was a mere stairway of shallow steps cut in the frozen snow to enable the laden caravan camels to keep their footing. For a carriage it was certainly the worst kind of track in the world, and Ahmet was piously eager to exchange the cumbrous *paiton* for a light sledge. But I dared not sanction a halt

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in any town for this purpose, and had either to peremptorily refuse or to passively resist his persuasion.

"Excellency," said Ahmet, "the carriage will break."

"Very well," said I, "I will pay for the breakage, or for the carriage if we have to abandon it."

"But the horses will die."

"All right; if a horse dies I will buy it. Two will carry us if need be."

"But, Excellency, the luggage—the rugs!"

I pointed to a ravine. "There is room for it there," I said.

"Ya, salaam!" cried Ahmet—a sort of Eastern equivalent for "Great Scot"—and the incident was closed. It was painful travelling. The jolting of the carriage was terrific and I feared for the springs—all swathed, though they were, in woollen bands and tightly bound with cord; and in the bad places—and they were many—I had to walk and lift the hind wheels, while Ahmet led and steadied the horses; but we negotiated the first pass in safety, thanks to the aid we got in a little Greek hamlet at its foot, where I did not mind hiring assistance, and easily found a dozen willing pairs of hands by whose help the *paiton*, drawn by one horse only, covered a mile or two of dangerous road at an angle of 45 degrees, the near side wheels on the track, the others high up the mountain.

The evening of the fourth day found us at the foot of the Kop Pass, and camped for the night in a squalid little hut in which we were so closely packed that I have ever since marvelled how the feat was accomplished. For, in addition to myself and Ahmet and our four horses, were the hut lord and his son, and a cow, a goat, a donkey, and a number of chickens—all in a room about 20 feet long by 12 wide. Other tenants were there in this dwelling—myriads of them—some being of varieties

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new to me, even after twenty-five years of Eastern travel, but no less industrious and persistent than my old acquaintances. The place was heated by one of those thin iron stoves that know no middle course, but must either roast the victim or leave him to freeze, and my host sat beside it stoking sedulously what time he discoursed of the last week's blizzard on Kop, when, as he said, not a bird could have crossed the pass, and even the wolves did not howl, and when a string of seventy laden camels of the Persian caravan had mistaken an out-jutting ledge of ice for the narrow path, and had fallen 800 feet into the ravine. Very gloomy were our prospects, according to this worthy, of getting the *paiton* across the Kop, but he offered his services and his son's and those of the half-dozen other villagers that made his world to aid us on the morrow, and sent his son to collect these good folk that we might arrange terms with them. While he talked he replenished the stove with a lavish hand until the atmosphere of that stable-drawing-room gathered and rose about me in thick misty wreaths richly flavoured. Something, I felt, must be done and at once, or neither on the morrow nor at any future date would I attempt the Kop Pass. Near me was a window—a pane of thick glass let into the wall, and not meant to open—and this window I resolved to obtain at any cost. I got it. Special Correspondents have to get things! But the old man haggled so long over the bargain, which, indeed, he could not understand, that I was nearly suffocated ere I could force the money into his hand, and he had a moment of poignant anxiety when he realized my purpose of smashing the glass and letting in fresh night air.

We came very near disaster on Kop, for about the middle of the pass the treacherous roadway gave under the *paiton*, and it turned over, but, as luck would have it, was saved from the fate of the camels by a broad shoulder

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of rock that jutted out from the face of the precipice some 5 feet only below the track. Yet, even as it was, it gave us several hours' work to drag the carriage up again to the road. Our efforts, however, were at length rewarded, and before long I was jolting down the far side of the mountain at a good hard gallop, all risk to springs and axles being forgotten in the joyous thought that our difficulties—and they had not been light—were now at an end. I knew, moreover, that now, whatever befell, I should not be arrested till I reached Erzeroum, or, if arrested, should be taken there, which would suit me every bit as well, and I slept that night in great comfort and peace of mind in a great roomy Persian Han, where over 800 huge double-humped Bactrian camels lay—packed like sardines—in a long covered court, and where the Hanji—an immensely fat Persian, with a beard painted flaming red—busied himself all night through in brewing tea for the shaggy Tartar camel drivers who sat around him in their great sheepskin papaks and broidered pushteens, and smoked incessant narghiles between fragrant glasses. And next day I drove into Erzeroum still unmolested, and, making straight for the British Consulate, was welcomed by my old friend, Mr. R. W. Graves, who, however, confessed to me afterwards that he had been a bit staggered by my appearance. Nor when I looked in the mirror in his comfortable bedroom was I surprised that I had seemed to cause some sensation as I drove through the town. For my face was quite black from the snow glare, one side of it was swollen out like a football, the eye being completely closed (this had been caused by the sun and the wind), and the skin was hanging in ragged and dirty strips. This, however, was but a small price to pay for the successful accomplishment of an enterprise that might well have had an awkward ending.

My arrival in the heart of the forbidden country

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caused considerable excitement at the Konak, more especially when the wires began to get to work from the Palace and the Porte in Constantinople. The Mushir, Governor-General of the Province, and the local authorities would probably not have bothered over much, but they were badly hauled over the coals by the Grand Vizier and his Imperial master for having allowed me (all unprotected as I was with required credentials) to reach Erzeroum at all. This, as the Governor-General smilingly acknowledged to me, could quite easily have been prevented if due warning of my approach had reached him.

As it was, the Turks played a wrong card. For the Grand Vizier made an application to Lord Rosebery, who was then Prime Minister, which was repeated some months later when Lord Salisbury took office, requesting that the British Government should require my withdrawal from Turkey. The representations met, of course, with the reply that might be expected—it was not for the British Government to interfere in the position—but the *faux pas* served me admirably, for having proclaimed the fact that I was moving about in the Armenian highlands, the good Turks were precluded from effecting my elimination. They therefore surrounded me with spies. No less than four police officials followed my footsteps at all hours. This unwearying surveillance I found could be profitably turned to advantage. Not many days, indeed, had passed before I had succeeded in making an arrangement with the chief of these police agents (his salary was much in arrears) which operated for our mutual benefit during the whole of my stay in the country. I found the watchfulness of these officers a great protection. Some months later, indeed, when things were getting towards their worst in Erzeroum, one of them intervened most timely between me and a would-be

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Dadash assassin one night in a narrow street near the British Consulate-General.

During the long months while I made Erzeroum my headquarters the horrors of the persecution of the Armenians were constantly multiplying around us. It is not my purpose here to go into details of the ordered atrocities committed by the Turks and the Kurds in these upland provinces of Erzeroum, Bitlis, and Van. But the fact that I was pursuing active investigations into these matters and communicating my reports to London by channels which the Turkish authorities found themselves unable to block, created—as may be understood—a certain amount of strain in my relations with the military and civil functionaries of the district. On the whole, however, these gentlemen, to whom I must have been in every way objectionable, behaved extremely well and controlled their rancour with an admirable discretion. For this, no doubt, I owed thanks to the Grand Vizier's ill-advised telegram to Downing Street. Still, the sort of armed truce that existed between the Turks and myself was occasionally trying, and if it had not been for the constant and most kindly friendship of Robert Wyndham Graves, the very able and much-tried British Consul-General, existence that summer, amid an atmosphere of recurrent horrors and atrocities which, though almost a witness of them, I could do nothing more than record, would have been a most heart-breaking experience.

There was in Erzeroum at that time a population of some 200,000 souls, twenty-seven persons of whom were Europeans—being the Consuls-General, with some members of their staffs, the American missionary—a splendid fellow—and his family, the Quarantine Doctor—an Austrian Jew—and myself. Of these twenty-seven, twelve were children, so that our white society was quite a ***petit-Commité***. The native population was made up of Turks,

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Persians, Kurds, and Circassians, with a very considerable body of Turkish troops—all Asiatics. These accounted for 140,000, among whom was a fairly large sprinkling of the *Dadash* element; i.e. bad men, whose numbers increased as the months sped, and they were brought in to do the dirty work that was preparing and awaited only the order from Constantinople. There were also some 60,000 Armenians, traders, bankers, artificers and clergy, together with the masters and pupils of the great Sanasarian College—one of the largest scholastic establishments of its kind in the Ottoman Empire. All these poor folk existed in a condition of abject terror, to which daily acts of persecution by the authorities contributed. They bore themselves bravely, however, despite the fact that every week brought us news of the gradual narrowing around us of the massacre zone, and one town after another—each time nearer to us—contributed its toll of slaughter to the tally of the Turk's blood lust.

I knew—in secret for the most part—all the heads of this mournful community of expectant victims. Some of them—the Archbishop was one—held that open intercourse was the wisest course, inasmuch as the Turks must inevitably know of our meetings. With him and the professors and their families, and some others, I used therefore to exchange almost daily visits, and it was more than a little painful to attempt to give comfort to the pretty, fear-racked wives and children of these households, telling them with lying lips to buck up and take heart, that the peril might pass, and the reign of terror cease, while certain all the time that, though I was practically in no danger, they were already doomed.

The attempt to cheer the Armenians and thus avert any untoward happening through terrorism, that might precipitate the impending catastrophe, was the constant task of Graves and Robert Chambers (the missionary).

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They performed this duty nobly, and contributed not a little to keep the Armenian community calm at least, and even to lessen the horrors of the day of tragedy when it came, as it did on the 2nd of November.

I do not write in detail of the Armenian massacres, by which in the years 1894–5 and 1896 one and a half million of the Sultan's Christian subjects were destroyed. The memory of the countless horrors of the World War is still so poignantly present that all antecedent atrocities are dwarfed by it almost into insignificance. But though the orders for the slaughters in each town throughout the Armenian provinces undoubtedly emanated from Yildiz Palace, I have never believed that the full responsibility for them lay wholly with Abdul Hamid. As we came to know later, the colonization of the fertile six provinces (known as Armenian) by his own people already formed a part of Kaiser William's scheme of world domination, and though he may himself have been innocent in the matter, he had around him men who were entirely ruthless, and willing to employ any means—among them wholesale bribery of powerful Turkish officials—to further the plan by eliminating in the most effectual way the then holders of the coveted ground.

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CHAPTER XV

AN ARMENIAN MEMORY

Graves and I pitch our camp. A disturbed night. Our Ombashi. The legend of Gellin Geldi. Our neighbours and the pool. Hatcho seeks the tithe assessor. The children thresh the corn. Hatcho's return from a day's shooting, his bag and his methods. Trouble for the idle. Sundown and rest.

PAT GRAVES (ROBERT WYNDHAM GRAVES), our Consul-General at Erzeroum, and I sat in the wide porch of our breakfast tent when the "Ombashi" entered and saluting, craved our pardon.

"Did the Bey Effendi hear the dogs in the night?" he asked.

It was idle to disguise the fact that the Bey Effendi and the other Effendi had passed most of the night invoking destruction on the dogs, who in camp and village and sheepfold, not to mention stragglers in the fields and waifs among the rocks, had barked with frenzied, unremitting fury for several hours.

We therefore acquiesced.

The Ombashi again craved pardon. He had thought we slept, or he would have roused us, and for the same reason he had held his fire. It was a wolf. He had come down probably with intentions on the neighbouring fold, and (we had killed a sheep the day before) had been attracted to the camp. The Ombashi from behind the kavass tent had watched him swing across the open at a hard trot sniffing the mutton. He must have been very hungry to have dared so much.

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Suddenly, as he had quartered among the tents, he found himself confronted with a ferocious monster—a hideous uncouth creature with a great paunchy body and slim legs, and a long straight back topped by yawning jaws. The thing stood silent, motionless, and menacing in the pale moonlight, and with a howl of dismay the wolf had turned and fled to the hills, his tail between his legs, in wild terror of—the cook's stove!

Our Ombashi was a grave man—aye, and a sad. No longer young, and corporal of police of long standing, he knew he would never be promoted. He was in truth a dull man, but it was not that that had blighted his career. I fear he was irredeemably honest. It seemed a pity that a man otherwise worthy should be unable to throw off a habit so fatal to his advancement. Yet so it was. Despite the contempt of his fellows and the manifest ill-will of his chief, he probably persisted in honesty to the end. Yet he was alive to the error of his ways, which, coupled with the fact that his pay was twenty-two months in arrears, had brought him to a settled melancholy. At night his despair sometimes mastered him, and found vent in wailings of excruciating song. At dawn he would hurry off to bathe in Gellin Geldi, a thermal spring on the hill slope close to our camp, which had and still has many votaries. These rocks indeed are honeycombed with hot springs. The stream which flowed before the camp and separated us from Hatcho's farm was but an overflow from Gellin Geldi and the springs in the neighbouring village. Some of these springs, where the water is almost too hot to touch, have been fashioned into baths with covered walls and cemented basins, and guardians who exacted fees.

Yet none enjoyed the reputation of Gellin Geldi, the rough, shallow pool, some 20 feet in diameter, that shines and bubbles among the bare rocks and

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lay some hundred yards from where we had pitched our tents.

Long, long ago, runs the legend, a Turkish maiden left her friends on her wedding-day to wander by the stream alone. The hours passed, and she did not return; and when they sought her, breathless among the rocks, a soft voice mocked them, saying, "*Gellin, Geldi*" (the bride has come). They tracked the voice to the pool where lay the maiden drowned; while the bubbling spring murmured: "Gellin Geldi," "Gellin Geldi," as it has done ever since.

Our Ombashi did very well to bathe early, for all day long the pool was claimed by ladies. Each morning half a dozen Turkish ladies with many black-eyed children would stream past our camp on foot, or in bullock-carts, towards the inviting pool. There the oxen were unyoked and rolled away to lie in the stream, their muzzles only above water; the carts were turned on end and hung with a killim or two, formed a shelter against the sun; and the drivers ambled off, to smoke and doze in the shade of the great overhanging rock that screened the pool from them. This done, the fun began. The ladies would spread their carpets near the edge of the pool and group themselves about it, their gorgeous sunshades and rich-hued charchaffs gleaming bravely in the warm light.

Awhile they rested from the fatigues of the journey, and smoked and chatted and teased each other merrily. The laughter, the chatter, and the screams of fun floated to me as I sat in the tent porch. Then came the real business of the day. First the children were unrobed one by one. I saw the sun-rays glitter on a small brown body which scampered across the rocks, and noted the splash of immersion in the warm pool. Followed among the sitting groups a slow discarding of the brilliant charchaffs, which were after all but dust-cloaks.

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Then began a movement as of the unrolling of great bundles of white gauze. I was somehow reminded of the Princesses of Wak-Wak quitting their swan plumage to bathe on the palace roof of the huntress sisters. Presently a tall slight form, surmounted by a sunshade, flitted across the rocks amid a peal of laughter. It was time to turn away. Ten minutes later, had one looked, "Gellin Geldi" would be seen dotted with sunshades seemingly afloat—gorgeous water-blooms flourishing in the midst of barren rocks.

Some of the bathers were our neighbours. After we pitched our tents, several other mushroom camps sprang up around us. The Alai Bey, the Mektubdji, the hunch-backed Cadi, were established with their *familialeri* in our vicinity. They were not very near, and always the stream divided their camps from ours. Yet—hated English though we were—our presence, we were told, was regarded by those Turkish neighbours as a safeguard, and inasmuch as we numbered a dozen able-bodied men, well armed and unencumbered by women needing protection, there was, maybe, much truth in the Cadi's contention. Nearest to us of all our Turkish neighbours were the tents of "Mal Yemez" and his *familia.* But this was natural. "Mal Yemez" ("he eats not his goods") was a pseudonym given to the wealthiest Turk in the province —a noted miser. The expense of a Zaptieh to guard his household would have struck like a knife to the heart of "Mal Yemez," who preferred rather to establish his womenfolk within easy hail of the *Giaourlaren Babalari*— the protectors of the non-believers. The proximity gave us a stereoscopic view of the inner life of a Turkish family. It taught us that away from the baleful influence of a fanatical town the Turkish Hanum was prepared to relax somewhat the rigidity of her outdoor demeanour. The "Mal Yemez" ladies, for instance, went about between

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their tents and those of their neighbours untrammelled by the hideous black veil that ordinarily concealed their features. Moreover, we noted them buzzing gaily around the cooking-place with their hair down their backs and chasing one another about the camp in the easy *déshabillé* of indoor life. The head of the household was a somewhat terrible person. In appearance he was like the miser of a stage play—lean, shrivelled, with a nose and chin that well-nigh touched, and an untidy turban. He was clad always in a mangy fur-lined robe of faded taffeta, and his heel-less papooshes flip-flopped on the ground as he walked. His son—a host of children swarmed amidst the tents—but this was a youth of twenty—had extravagant habits that tried the old man sorely. One night we heard a fearful dispute between them, occasioned by the youth's latest outbreak—the hire of a carriage to carry him to camp from the town. It was a three-hours' drive, and "Mal Yemez," who could not have been worth less than half a million sterling, was aghast at the extravagance, and loaded his hapless offspring with the bitterest reproaches. "If you are not man enough to walk," he said finally, with a snort of contempt, "you should have borrowed from the *metayer*." It was a plan the shrewd old man greatly favoured. He had many farms worked on the *metayer* system, and was the despair of his tenants, to whom he lent money at exorbitant interest, and from whom he exacted into the bargain a variety of services. Thus the entire cost of the transport of his family and belongings to camp and back to the town devolved on the unfortunate holders of his lands in the neighbourhood.

But the most interesting figure among our neighbours was Hatcho—Hatcho, who I rejoice to say was no tenant of "Mal Yemez." For weeks after we reached camp Hatcho was a picture of grim, resigned despair. Each

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morning and evening he made the tour of his few fields, where the ripe corn begged the reaping-hook, and gazed first sadly at the heavy drooping ears of grain, and then timorously at the heavens. If a dark cloud showed over the crest of the Palantokan, he would shake his outstretched hands in misery and pluck savagely at his turban. Did all seem smiling with serene promise of fair weather, Hatcho would only shake his head despondingly and go once more on his weary way to the Multazim. For on this functionary, the assessor of the tithe, depended Hatcho's future, his winter's food, his store of seed corn, his rent, his cattle—everything; and until the Multazim had visited the farm and valued the standing crops the farmer dared not touch them. Come rain, come frost, come storm, it did not matter. He could but watch the progress of his ruin with folded hands. To be sure the Multazim, like every other Turkish official, was amenable to reason when jingled in a bag. Hatcho's arguments must that year have been weighty, and at length they prevailed. Early one week the assessor made his appearance. He came on horseback, and being merciful to his beast, gave it a generous feed of Hatcho's standing corn while he transacted his business. But Hatcho did not heed, nor did he resent—albeit an arbitrary man among his fellows—the violent abuse showered on him by the Turk. All he wanted was to be through with the business and get to work. And what a happy excitement was there when at last the Multazim had ridden away. Hatoon (Mrs. Hatcho), Mofses, Avadis, and Miriam came running up from the river. They had hidden under the bank lest the Multazim, guessing their anxiety, should exact yet a further bribe.

"Do we begin?"

"Shukur Allah," replied Hatcho. In less than three minutes the whole family were at work, and by night,

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when Hatcho, stripped to his shirt and wide cotton drawers, stood shaking the wrinkles out of his short jacket, he gazed with pride upon the wealth of his first small field laid low and stacked beside the threshing-floor.

Came a day when Hatcho gave himself a holiday. He had earned it well. On the farm nought remained to do but threshing and the winnowing, and the conduct of these operations had been left to the children, to whom from time to time appeared at a gallop from the distant village Mrs. Hatcho in blue trousers and a red kerchief, breathless, inconsequent, and a trifle irritable. Not that the children cared. For them it was a time of delight. The threshing-floor, prepared long before in a corner of a yondja patch that had gone wrong, was a great disc of puddled mud, hard-dried. On this was strewn the corn, and the process of threshing and chaff-cutting was as simple as it was primitive. It was also slow.

A yoke of oxen was harnessed to a kind of wooden harrow, in which great jagged flints formed the teeth. On the harrow stood a child, who drove the oxen round and round over the corn. And that was all.

The grain left the ear, and the straw was broken, and a light wind, aided by a wooden shovel, did all the requisite winnowing. Ruth as a child probably rode round and round on a threshing harrow and threshed her own and her comrade's corn as Miriam did that year; each time she passed Avadis, whose beasts were headed in an opposite direction, while Mofses, the senior of the party and aged at most seven years, stood in the middle armed with a huge wooden fork and hustled the corn in approved style. Round and round trudged the patient oxen. They were not muzzled, but if they paused to eat of the corn they were treading out, their energetic little drivers roused them on with repeated thwackings.

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It was a hot and drowsy afternoon. A stork was chappering on the mill in the village, a young camel was vainly seeking non-existent shade beside a stable wall, a great flock of grey cranes was feeding in the moist fields by the river bank. Little Avadis, I saw, had fallen off his harrow and, too lazy to get up, lay dozing in the corn, while Miriam's stick lay idle beside her little curled-up form. Even the energy of Mofses the valiant drooped and slacked—aye, and failed. The yokes of oxen were alone busy, but not treading out the corn.

* * * * *

Heh!—a sudden commotion on the hill-brow behind the camp. A roar of loud, harsh voices.

Was it a Kurdish raid, an Armenian rising, a local blood feud broken out anew? None of these.

It was only Hatcho returning, grateful and triumphant, from his day's outing. He was not alone. With him were two wild-looking fellows in immense turbans and armed to the eyebrows. *Laz*, tobacco smuggler, was written all over them. Hatcho, too, was armed—with an ancient prohibited *chakmak*. Not only was Hatcho a sportsman, but what was more, he must have squared the police, otherwise the possession of that forbidden flint-lock would surely have entailed on him imprisonment for any length of time, from five to one hundred and one years. Yes, Hatcho was a sportsman, and his violent dispute with his companions was merely a friendly bargaining for a fresh supply of smuggled powder for the cherished *chakmak*.

He had made a good bag that day: a couple of bustards, a goose, half a dozen ducks, and as many plover—good enough shooting with a flint-lock or any other gun. The bustards are the hardest to get. They are very shy, and there is no sort of cover near their favourite feeding-ground in the open plain on the far bank of the Euphrates.

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Hatcho had stalked these, lying flat on a bullock-cart, which the big fowl had allowed to approach to within a hundred yards, and then running in, dropped his bird as it rose, for bustards are slow in getting away.

Gaily narrating the triumphs of his day, Hatcho, coming slowly down the slope and straight, was within view of his beloved fields. Before him was his threshing-floor. Miriam, Mofses, and Avadis were still slumbering peacefully, their little limbs flung all abroad. The two yoke of oxen were still busy munching, munching, munching, as they had done for hours past. Some hundreds of birds had joined the banquet. In the distance a fluttering of blue trousers marked where Mrs. Hatcho, a thought behind time, was approaching on one of her flying visits.

It was a scene of placid peace and plenteous prosperity to the eye of the onlooker. The soul of Hatcho was sealed to its appeal.

"Haugh! Haugh!—ie ya Kafir! Ya Hunzoor!" yelled Hatcho as he raced down the slope. "What, sleeping, Christian pigs! Allah curse your religion!"

The words were no doubt used unconsciously, for Hatcho was himself a Christian. But then he had heard them so often. Anyhow, they broke the spell. Miriam and her brothers tumbled to their feet and, conscious of their guilt, ran to the stream to bathe their little flushed faces. Hatcho's blue jacket with its tarnished silver lace had been thrown aside, and he was hard at work with the great wooden shovel amid a cloud of chaff and dust, from which his angry words burst explosively. The swollen oxen dragged themselves heavily over the grain. And Hatoon, who arrived breathless as usual (which gave her husband a chance to relieve his feelings), made at them wildly with a stick, as though, poor, placid beasts, they had been to blame.

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It was now sundown. The peewits were crying as they circled over the stream; a dozen great ruddy sheldrake flocked, croaking, overhead far out of shot. Graves and I called to the dogs. It was time we went to look for a few ducks, and maybe pick up a snipe or two for the pot.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE CRETAN OUTBREAK AND HIS MAJESTY'S JOLLIES

The Cretan revolt breaks out. Zaimis lends me his aid. Canea in flames. Human torches. The battleships of six nations. On the bastion. The fire at the Konak.

WHEN THE CRETAN REBELLION broke out in January 1897 I hurried down from Constantinople, where I had spent Christmas, to Canea, the Cretan capital, and the residence of all the Consuls-General of Europe. I made first for Athens, where M. Zaimis, who is still one of the chief forces in Greek politics to-day, was Minister of Marine. He at once placed himself at my disposal, promising me every assistance—a promise which he kept in the most generous spirit both throughout the Cretan revolution and the Greco-Turkish war which followed it. As a start he introduced me to Admiral Reineké, who invited me to make the passage to the revolted island as his guest. "We may have a difficulty," said the Admiral, "in effecting a landing, because the island is blockaded by the fleets of six nations."

This was true, but as a matter of fact most of the blockading work was left to the British vessels under Admiral Harris's command, and looking back upon the events of that time, I can but think that there must have been something approaching the "Nelson's telescope" comedy in the way our British commanders fulfilled their mission. Otherwise, I am certain it must have been

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impossible that I should cross without hindrance some half-dozen times between Crete and Piræus as I did during the next two months.

When I reached Canea the pretty little town was burning brightly as a torchlight procession, the incessant fighting waged in all its streets between Moslems and Christians (and also between these forces and those landed from the warships of six European Powers for the purpose of restoring order) had effectually prevented all attempts at extinction of the fires lit in a hundred different quarters of the town, whose numbers increased with every opportunity afforded to one or other of the frenzied belligerents. The chief industry of Crete, it may be remembered, is the manufacturing of oil from the groves of olive trees that cover the island, and as it is the custom of the inhabitants to store their yearly produce in great tanks beneath their houses, it may well be imagined that street fires, once started, were not easily got under. For weeks, indeed long after the streets of the Christian quarter were merely charred masses of tottering ruins, these tanks of oil were still brightly burning, and a heavy cloud of greasy smoke hung like an inky pall over the town.

There was more than oil alight in several of these vats. Some of them were, in a manner, *ghauts*, where human wicks shone torch-like amid the viscous liquor. For in their fierce onslaught the frenzied Moslems had thrown many of their victims—whether dead or living made small matter—into these fiery graves. Thick clouds of burned lime-dust filled the air, augmented hourly by fresh supplies as the walls of gutted houses crumbled and fell in with loud reports, to the constant peril of the Marines and bluejackets patrolling the deserted streets. Deserted, because the Christian population had fled—had sought refuge aboard ships in the harbour; had taken vessel to Smyrna or Piræus; had in the case of the hardier and more

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intrepid, the vengeance seekers, made their way, by stealth, out to the village strongholds in the hills, to carry on thence the internecine war. And the Moslems—masters, in a sense, of the town—strutted on the quay bristling with weapons; thronged the cool shades of the tall Venetian archway, with its marbled insignia, that made the gateway to the walled town; and, gathered in bands some fifty to one hundred strong, made demonstration before the gates of the Government House, clamouring for rifles and cartridges with which to attack the Christian villages in the hills near by the city.

Fighting, however, within the walls had ceased. It had needed but a few days of concentrated energetic action by the landed international forces to so far restore order as to enable the elementary condition of existence to be resumed. The process had been a comparatively simple one. The fighters, whether Moslem or Christian, were almost invariably of the same race, not infrequently of the same name and family. The Moslems, however, who had verted to secure material advantages, were, especially now that the Christian quarter was destroyed, the chief property owners in the town; while the Christians held the principal farms, olive groves, and orange orchards in the districts round about. As a result, the situation resolved itself into a holding of the town by the Mahomedans, and of the country by their Christian cousins, with the daily diversion of a pitched battle between the two forces round and about the frowning walls of the old Genoese town.

Within the town itself, despite the quieting influence of the foreign patrols and the fact that, with few exceptions, the Christians had all fled, the humble and turbulent to their friends in the hills, and the well-to-do and law-abiding to seek refuge at Smyrna, or Piræus, there was no lack of disturbance and commotion. At least once in every twenty-four hours there arose a terrific uproar, and the

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Moslems, who had perhaps suffered a few casualties in the morning's hill fighting, rushed to the Government House clamouring for arms, and generally managed to set fire to a Christian house or two that had hitherto escaped attention. Then we had a mutiny of the local gendarmerie, who shot their commander and other officers in their own guardroom, and whose exuberance had to be quelled by several volleys from the Russian patrol, which, being admirably delivered, had a timely and soothing effect. But custom stales in revolutionary excursions, as in other matters, and to us representatives of newspapers, who, after the first accounts, had but little to chronicle, the monotony of our daily life soon became galling, and I, for one, longed so anxiously for some exciting diversion that should restore the flagging energy to my pen that even so harmless and amusing a little adventure as once befell me came as a welcome relief.

There was no hotel accommodation in Canea, for such hostelries as had not been burned had been abandoned by their proprietors, and it was not easy to find a lodging. At first our own Marine officers had kindly put me up in the school-house, which was their improvised barracks; but this, of course, could be but a temporary arrangement, and I thought myself lucky when, with Beaman of the *Standard*, I secured a furnished house in an uninjured corner of the wrecked Christian quarter. All around us were silent houses with closed shutters, abandoned by their frightened tenants, and there was a certain sense of exhilaration in the thought that we alone were alive in all that quarter, and that any night some enterprising Moslem (in debt, maybe, to our absentee landlord) might drift along with his kerosene can and bunch of cotton waste and make an illumination of us while we slumbered. For at night we were quite alone, and as we thought neighbourless, the two Turkish cab-drivers—out of work for

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obvious reasons—whom we had secured as servants, being fain to protect their own little households on the town wall during the hours of darkness. It chanced on the first evening that we dined with General Chermside (the British High Commissioner) and Major Bor, who had a stone house (and, of course, a guard) outside the walls, on the Suda Road, and when we took our leave near midnight our hosts insisted on sending an escort with us to our quarters. "Either you will be shot at the gates," they said, "or you will be refused admission, and, in either case, you won't have a pleasant time." This seemed so plausible an argument that we accepted the offer, well pleased, and, the gate passed safely, were glad to further avail ourselves of our attendant lantern to guide us through the dark wreckage of the burned quarter to our new home. Arrived at the door, I lugged out the ponderous wooden key, and the sergeant attacked the great box-lock with energy. All his efforts, however, were unavailing. The door remained stubbornly closed with the key stuck fast in it, and two militant journalists shivering on the wrong side. The position was untenable, for we had no other refuge, and we decided as we could not open the door to remove it. This operation presented no great difficulties, and, with the aid of his fixed bayonet and a lump of concrete, Ali Chaoush soon had got the better of the primitive hinges, and we gained an entrance. "Come," said I then, "to my room. We shall find lights, and, maybe, the materials for some sort of barricade to replace the door." Together we stumbled—the three of us—up the unaccustomed stair, and reached a door on the first landing which, with some trouble, I opened.

The room was well lighted, but seemed to my hurried glance strangely unfamiliar, and sitting up in the bed, to our dismay and surprise, were a young lady and a young gentleman, whose wild eyes and blanched faces showed

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that our rough entrance must have thrown them into an agony of fear. So startled were we all five by the unexpected *contretemps*, that some minutes passed before any attempt at explanation was made on either side. And even then we wandered awhile in a maze of confusion, for we thought, not unnaturally, that these were our landlords returned from their exile, and it was some little time before we gathered that the house was not our house at all, but that of a plucky couple who had thought to brave the dangers of residence in this troubled neighbourhood.

Needless to say, our apologies were profuse and sincere, while the startled couple, whom we aided to reconstruct their broken door, were so rejoiced to know us as their neighbours in that desert of bricks and mortar, that they not only accepted our excuses, but appeared delighted with the misconception that had brought about our acquaintance. They remained, indeed, our very good friends during our Cretan sojourn.

The tiny harbour hummed always with echoes of the tireless energy of steam launch and pinnace, or barge and gig and galley, each with its middy in be-decked command, speeding shoreward or back, or from one to another of the vessels of the several fleets. Away in the offing and in Suda Bay, round the corner, sixty warships swung at anchor, symbolizing at once the might and the selfishness of Europe; and constant detonations of complimentary artillery proclaimed the official visits of Admirals and Consuls-General. Out in the harbour and beyond, all was bright and bustling gaiety: parade, and circumstance, and flaunting of gold lace; a blending of bands, banners, and the bagatelles of ordered pomp. Yes, this was the dominant note at sea. But ashore all was very different. Streets silent and deserted; houses, whole quarters even, gutted and smouldering; shops and stores, their doors

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and shutters staved in, half-looted, and with torn and broken goods strewing the floors, and even littering the pavement without; the wearied sentries and patrols, blinded and choking from the dust and stench, alone animating fitfully these scenes of desolation; and ever at the Palace that yelling, turbulent, savage mob, Arabs and Greek Moslems, the murderers of yesterday, passionately claiming the means to be murderers again to-morrow, and pressing their demands with the intense and frenzied eagerness that always grips these Eastern folk when the blood-lust is on them. Yes, misery, menace, and murder were the dominant notes ashore.

Away on the West Bastion of the grand old Genoese fortifications stood planted seven tall flagstaffs, from which flapped enigmatically the standards of Turkey and of the six great European Powers. A faint glimmer of humour had attended the hoisting of the flags of Europe. We landed first, and erected a modest and unassuming staff in a convenient position, and Italy, following, was careful —for the reason that she strives always to march alongside of us in matters naval—that her mast should be of exactly the same height as ours. The French and Russians paid each other a similar compliment in virtue of their much-talked-of alliance; but, of course, overtopped us by cubits considerable as was to be expected. Austria adopted an easy neutrality, somewhere between ourselves and the Allies; and then came Germany's triumph. The Deutschers, who had waited to the last of a purpose, came ashore in great state and numbers. Numerous officers, brilliant with gold lace and much swollen with beer (all German naval officers are immensely stout), toiled up the steep and rugged path to the bastion; and there, with much ceremony, was set up a huge great scaffold pole, a sort of towering Marconigraph signal mast, from which, amid the "Hochs" of the assembled Teutons, the naval

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flag of the Fatherland floated out—full 20 feet above the rest of Europe. And it fell down in the night, and broke in half, to the keen delight of more people than it behoved us to mention.

Very quaint was it to observe the European concert in miniature on the West Bastion. Each flag, it should be said, had a guard of twelve men and an officer for the protection of its honour. So that there were gathered in this small space six camps representing Europe, and yet a seventh, in which lurked the Turk unspeakable.

All day and all night the smart seamen of the several fleets, rifle on shoulder and cutlass on hip, paced the broad ramparts of the bastion, on sentry-go. And, inasmuch as each nation had its own peculiarity of pace, its own trick of step and time, the effect produced by the resultant ordered confusion was indescribably funny. The Russians marched with long, slow strides; the Frenchmen with a quick, lilting tripple; the German, of course, swaggered portentous, inwardly "praising the Fatherland, the happy Fatherland"; ourselves displayed that royal roll of the "British Blue" which no foreign seaman can affect. Altogether, the unconscious impression produced on an unprejudiced mind by this parading of Europe's strength was of the big cat-house at the Zoo. What the Turkish sentinel may have thought of it all, who shall say? Ragged, out-at-elbows, unshod, with no buttons on his clothes, and a fortnight's moth-eaten beard on his chin, he slouched slowly round his tottering pole like a sick bear dragging on a chain.

Great was the interchange of courtesies among these alien races. To be sure, much was perforce pantomime, for the men could not talk to one another; but they could, and did, swap tobacco, and interproffer grapes and oranges and other cates, and were helpful each to each with small kindly services. Among the officers punctilio

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naturally held greater sway, and, indeed, it might perhaps be deemed unseemly that Russia should make overtures to Great Britain with a capful of squashed dates, or Italy woo Austria with a canteen of stewed cuttle. Some of the foreigners could exchange little compliments, and even talk about the weather. But, of course, this relaxation failed the Briton. For some reason, unknown probably even to himself, the British naval officer is probably the worst linguist in all the world. He circles the entire globe; his knowledge is illimitable; he is at home in each and every port; but he knows no tongue but English. Perchance the fact that the sun never sets on the English flag—or, for that matter, on an English war—may go for something. The fact is there, and "Oui," and "Non" and "Merci" and the faltered "Est-ce-que" of the young man at the Podsnap dinner, about made up the tale of British amenities on the West Bastion.

There was much rain that early springtide, and as Crete, like all these lovely islands, is cruelly fever-stricken, all possible precautions were taken to keep men free of this scourge. One of these, and an important, was to raise the men some inches above the damp ground by means of a flooring in the tents. The planks for this purpose were obtained from half-burned houses in the wrecked Christian quarter, and were, as may be imagined, so infested with vermin that it was not easy to decide which was vermin and which wood. I stood listening to the comments of the men while the work progressed, and some certainly were very funny. "Now, my lads," said the corporal in charge of the working party (Marines formed the guard at the time), "you won't 'ave no trouble with them 'ere bits of wood. You've only got to tell 'em where to go, and they'll move off the ground as brisk as guardees." And again, when the flooring was being laid, it chanced that there were two planks short in the

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measuring, and the men claimed to have brought them. "Jumbo, lad," called one "Jolly" over the parapet to a chum below, "you ain't seen nothin' o' them two planks, 'ave yer?" "Love yer, yuss, Lampy," came the reply. "Last time I see 'em they was over the rampart making fast for 'ome."

But, in good sooth, they laughed and made merry over every trial and hardship, the great as well as the small, as indeed is the manner of the British fighting man wherever I have met him at his work. When set to pull down tottering walls that bade fair always to crush them in the process, they made jokes over each fresh narrow escape, and exchanged ironical compliments at each other's filthy appearance when emerging from the ruin covered with mud, ashes, and mortar slime.

Perhaps their happiest time—it was half-night and half-day—was when the Government House, or Konak, was by accident burned down. We had made the Italian Commandant Governor of the town, and the Konak, an old Venetian palace, part stone, but mostly wood, was, of course, his residence. By what mischance it befell I know not, but somehow a lamp was overturned, and in a moment the whole place was ablaze.

There is, of course, no water system in Canea. There was in old time, but under the Turks it has long since gone to wrack and ruin, like all else administered by Turkey. The householder, therefore, buys his daily provision at the door from gentlemen who carry it on their backs in pig-skins. Thus the Marines, who, barracked near by, had rushed at once to the scene, found all their work cut out for them. There was a gale blowing, and as the whole of that quarter of the town was built of wood, and packed as closely as the model farm in a child's box of toys, it was necessary to tear down blazing houses, literally with their hands, with the end to prevent

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the spreading of the flames. It was desperate hard work, and deadly dangerous in places, and a good many ugly burns and bruises were inevitable; but the "Jollies" put their backs into the job, and slaved—well, like British fireman—can I say more?—and found time amid their toil to shriek with laughter at the figure cut by the Italian Commandant. That unfortunate officer, I know not from what cause, had been fain to rush out of the blazing palace costumed, for all attire, in three newspapers.

He was a valiant gentleman, and sought, in the flame-girdled courtyard, to push forward the work of extinction and salvage with all needful energy. But he was, it must be owned, heavily handicapped. Indeed, I will defy any man to maintain an attitude of dignity and reserve when, dressed out like a cheap cracker at a Christmas party, the shower of angry sparks raining on him is making of his frail integument the very semblance of a colander. Alas! poor Commandant! Yell upon yell of irrepressible laughter greeted his oaths and contortions until such time as some Samaritan cloaked his smarting nudity with a greatcoat.

But they were always laughing, the "Jollies," and always equally ready—nor more, nor less—for either work, or fun, or fighting. When dusk had fallen on the wind-swept, rain-soaked bastion, there was ever a nightly concert—a European concert, it were aptly called. The *wing-wang* came forth from its sail-cloth bag, and its damp strings sputtered squadgy accompaniments. A zither lurked in the Austrian tent, and sweet, plaintive melodies grew on it under skilled hands. There were, you are sure of it, a guitar and a mandoline in the Italian camp; and if the Italians are not masters of these instruments, where would you seek them? And the songs that were sung! The French, melancholy, nostalgic; the home thought dominant. "*Ne pleures plus, oh ma mère, ton enfant*

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livré à ces rudes soldats." The Russians' glorious bass voices blended in rich, soft, pathetic ballads of the South —" the little Russia," as they call it. The Italians gave delicious songs, such as " Oh Dolce Napoli Suole beata," or Braga's Serenade, or others of that school, alternating, however, at times with breezy ditties—well, breezy in the sense of half a gale, with a chorus unfit for publication. The Germans trolled: " *Herz Mein Herz Warum Sie Traurig*," or " Wenn die Blumen," or " Liebe feugelein." The Austrians thrilled us with quaint, languid melodies, impregnated with suppressed passion.

Why is it, I wonder, that all the fighting men of the world love sadness in their musical recreation? Even our own—soldiers, sailors, and " Jollies "—adore those songs which they chant almost with streaming eyes. Think of their favourites—" Break the news to mother," " Comrades," " My little partner Nell," and all the rest. Ah, well, perhaps, after all, it is ever the thought of home that seizes the active tired man in his moments of repose.

Our concerts lasted until " lights out " sounded. And then to well-earned rest. What mattered that our right shoulder was in a puddle, and that rain was dripping as from a Pasteur filter on to our hair? We could still sleep. Away in the hilltops a village—two, nay, three—fresh lit up by marauders, made twinkling torches amid the orange groves. But we could rest, or hope to do so, until the sputtering of distant rifle fire signalled the dawn, and we must rise and watch through our glasses the opening of battle.

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CHAPTER XVII

GREECE. THE GRECO-TURKISH WAR

A tragi-comic picnic. I fill in time between Crete and Sudan. Wire to "Dogger" Knight to join me. Zaimis again helps me. Army horses and saddles. The Kaiser's two-faced policy. My Greek and Turkish friends. The game begins. The powder magazine. Essad Pasha's house. The Pente Pegadia Pass. How we went down.

LOOKING BACK on the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, I am forced to the opinion that it was the quaintest tragi-comic picnic in which I have ever participated. It must, I suppose, be styled a war because hostile armies were arrayed against each other and gunpowder was burnt and men were killed. Also large numbers of men on both sides ran away whenever occasion served —and occasion served pretty frequently. As a campaign, hostilities should have been begun six weeks before they did, in which case the Greeks would have won the day, as, indeed, they deserved to do. But Kaiser Wilhelm's whole desire at the time was to cosset up the Turks, and although he did not desire that Greece should be crushed, it did not on the other hand suit his policy—for the future—that the Sultan should be humiliated.

In February 1897 the Greeks had 34,000 men—all they could muster—massed near Larissa, on the Thessaly plain, and another 25,000 spread along the bank of the Arakthos River (which was the Greco-Turk frontier) in Epirus, with its headquarters at Arta. The Turks, on the other hand, had at that time only 28,000 men in Thessaly and some

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15,000 men at Janina, on the Turkish side of the Pente Pegadia Pass. The Kaiser shrewdly appreciated that man for man the fighting qualities of the Greeks and Turks were very much of a muchness, the scale probably turning in favour of the Greeks as regarded discipline and moral.

Wilhelm therefore placed himself at the head of the Powers of Europe in a stern injunction to the Greeks, that they must not declare war against Turkey, under pain of Europe's displeasure. Then he gave the tip to Sultan Abdul Hamid, who at once threw another 100,000 men into Thessaly and another 25,000 men into Janina. This operation covered the six weeks I have mentioned, at the end of which time Turkey declared war against King George, and the Kaiser, being agreeable, England and the rest of Europe raised no voice in protest.

Thus, when hostilities began on the 18th of April, 1897, the issue, at least as regards Thessaly, was never for a moment in doubt. In an open plain a force of 34,000 men could have no possible chance against an army of 128,000, well able to envelop it, and the retreat from Larissa, on which so much ridicule has been poured, was Crown Prince Constantine's only possible course, if he wished to save his forces from ignominious capture.

However, the war—when it came—suited me very well, for I was able to sandwich it in very nicely between the Cretan revolution, in which I had been engaged since January, and the second phase of the advance into the Sudan, for which I was due on the Nile in early August.

For my own part, I had believed that Constantine would never be so foolish as to attempt to fight in the plains of Thessaly. I had contemplated that he would set his back to Volo so as to keep the Turks engaged, and that the real Greek effort would be made in Epirus, where, should the Greeks once occupy Janina, all their

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strolled towards him. He seized them both, and I heard a sort of sobbing sigh. "Ach!" he cried. "Ach!" and he flung himself back against the wall of the corridor and laughed long and hysterically.

Then after a moment he took me by the hand.

"*Kaimène*," he said, "this is the powder magazine, and your candles were planted on a sack of explosives. Had they burned another inch, not only would the Remendrion Stratton have been blown sky high, but with it the whole Greek cause."

* * * * *

That little one-month campaign—the Kaiser stopped it on the 18th of May—when the Greeks showed signs that they could beat the Turks and capture Janina—was full of pictures. Here is another of them.

We—that is to say the Greeks—had crossed the river, the Turks retreating before us, had cleared the plain lands beyond, and had driven our enemy through the long "Pass of the Five Wells" (the Pente Pigadia Pass), right back to the entrance of the broad plain at whose far end stood Janina. Our armies had tramped along the high causeway that overhung the spring flooded valley below, and some 12,000 men held a strong position in a broad open space in the middle of the pass.

We camped one evening—Knight and I—in a plain village at the entrance to the pass. Essad Pasha—a great Albanian magnate and property owner (he was murdered later, in Paris)—(an enemy, of course)—had confided his house to our care, in the hope that thus it might be saved from spoliation. I think we did save it to some extent, though when, some time later, I met Essad Pasha at the British Embassy in Constantinople, he told me that the Greek peasants of the locality had robbed him of property worth £80,000. Anyhow, we had a rough and agitated

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night in that Turkish mansion. The villagers and farmers around had fled, like their lord, and this news had spread far and wide. From midnight on the house was besieged by peasants from the hills near by, and my friend Knight and I had all our work cut out to hold the buildings—which, fortunately, like all big houses hereabouts, had no windows on the ground floor.

By noon the place was surrounded by a huge crowd, in which, it seemed to me, many Balkan types were represented.

The stables, cattle sheds, and outhouses had been rifled, even the buildings themselves had been carried away piecemeal, and the garden and vineyards were as though a locust flight had visited them. Knight and I were besieged by our own folk, and were only saved when relief came in the shape of Essad Pasha's henchman—the enemy—as I have said, it was an *opera bouffe* war—who cleared a way for us through the ranks of our *friends*. Our pack mules had passed the night in the cellars, and our horses in the wide hall, where they had browsed on the hay stuffing of the divans to which they were tethered.

Essad's young men made a way for us, yet before we had gone 500 yards three of our laden pack mules had been captured by our good Greek friends, and a stalwart enemy raced with me to retrieve some of my most precious personal possessions from an aged female patriot, who was smuggling them—mule and all—up a goat path in the near-by hill.

This was a Greek triumph, and our success endured for several days. We conquered the " Pass of the Five Wells," and at its far end were within twenty miles of Janina, whose smoke we could see across the plain.

And then unaccountably (or so it was at the moment) a sudden order came from Athens for a retirement of the successful little army. We did not know at the time,

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though later we realized it, that Berlin was pulling the strings in this campaign, and that to serve his own ends the Kaiser was blandly sacrificing Greek interests and holding up the Greek army to ignominy.

My friend Knight and I had been throughout with the advance guard of the forces. We had gone with them right through the pass, and had confidently hoped to be the first men into Janina. During all those days we saw, I am bound to say, but little of any of our brothers of the Press. Once, indeed, in the little camp I had established near the head of the pass, we were visited by Mr. Nevinson (he, I think, represented the *Chronicle*), who was certainly the most enterprising of our contemporaries. And Stephen Crane (the young American who wrote *The Real Badge of Courage* before he had ever seen a shot fired) also spent an afternoon with us. Save for these two, and for poor young Hamilton Gatliff—an adventurous tourist—no one came near us, and I am pleased to think that the bulletins that each evening I used to send down to General Manos at Headquarters gave him a better perspective of what was happening than anything he received from other sources. The General admitted as much, and both he and the Athens Press gave me public thanks, for which I am still proud.

And then came this disgraceful order to retire—the edict of Potsdam which poor King George of Greece, in his stucco palace in the Place de la Constitution, dared not disobey, although it left the stigma of cowardice in the field upon all his subjects.

The Greek army received this command with angry dismay. They were winning. Success was before them —a success which, had it been prosecuted, would have saved Greece infinite anguish that was to come, and might well have changed the whole complexion of the Balkan problem. The army withdrew sullenly, but in good order.

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I had established, on a hilltop midway in the pass, a work camp in the village of Koumoutzades, where my colleague and I could find peace to pen our long descriptive articles to our respective papers. Beneath us, at the foot of the rugged hill, 12,000 men were camped, with General Botzaris, a grandson of the famous Botzaris of 1826, as their commander.

When Knight and I galloped back, after our last fight at the pass head, this great camp was already evacuated. Not a man was left. We made our way up the rugged hill face to Koumoutzades, and found the whole village anxiously awaiting us. It was the head man's house that I had chartered, and there we held a hurried council. Already the whole pass rang and echoed with the volleys fired by the advancing Turks, and the sky was red with the fires of burning homesteads.

"You must go," I told these poor distressed folk. "Which is best, your lives, or your property? The one is inevitably forfeit, but you need not lose the other. My friend and I will escort the whole village down the mountain and through the pass to Arta—and by God's grace we will save you all."

Needless to say, this offer was gratefully accepted. We had at the time eleven horses and eighteen sumpter mules, and save for the beasts Knight and I must ride, we placed all at the disposal of the village. Our own stuff didn't matter. All was arranged, and I gave the village council an hour to prepare.

Work was work, of course, and during that intervening hour Knight and I were both hard at it. We were in a great room, round whose walls were shelves, one above the other, and all piled with rich goods—carpets, copper cooking vessels, quilts, blankets, bales of soft goods—everything in fact that could make for the furnishing of a home.

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Of a sudden, while I wrote, a sound, as of a sob, claimed my attention.

In the doorway of the room stood the daughter of the house—a tall, slender girl, maybe eighteen, and charmingly pretty. She stood a moment in silence, and then slowly advanced into the long room, making a sweeping gesture with her outstretched hands at all the laden shelves.

And then in tense, agonized tones she spoke.

"We are going," she said, "and we are abandoning everything. What of me? What is my case? All that you see here was my marriage dower, built up since my birth. And I was to have been married next week."

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE ATBARA

A soldiers' fight. Sir William Gatacre and the British contingent. Sir Archibald Hunter commands the Sirdar's forces. Rundle, Wingate, and Slatin. The zareeba and our preparations. Utter weariness. The dead donkeys. The second stockade. Colonel Murray of the Seaforths. The orderly, the dervish, and the elephant gun.

I SUPPOSE THAT THE BATTLE of the Atbara was the prettiest fight ever fought in the Sudan, and certainly it was the hottest Sudan engagement in which I have ever taken part. Of course, at Tamai, in the time long ago, we had suffered severely through the faults of our commander, and indeed lost more men than in any other battle waged against the dervishes. When one considers that on that tiny field, of one regiment alone, the famous Black Watch, fell no fewer than three officers, eleven sergeants, and sixty-five privates, to say nothing of the many killed and wounded among other corps of our small force, it will be granted that I am justified in describing that particular adventure as having been distinctly disastrous. And even so, also, was our hard-fought battle—fourteen years later—away up the Atbara River, the most exciting of our contests with that brave and stubborn enemy, the dervish.

Omdurman no doubt was Lord Kitchener's crowning triumph, and of that fight I may tell in another chapter. The odds against us were infinitely greater on that memorable day, for then we had to contend—ourselves less than 18,000 strong—against 65,000 of the Khalifa's

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finest fighting men. But then we were the attacked, and we had our backs to the Nile, and it was for the dervishes to overcome us, if they could, and from the first the issue of the day was hardly ever in doubt.

The affair of the Atbara was quite another matter. The Emir Mahmoud had under him a force of 24,000 men established in a very strong position protected by a zareeba of thorn-bushes, some 15 feet high and 30 feet wide, behind which the whole extent of his ground was honeycombed with rifle-pits guarded by some dozen stout stockades. Our business was to take this stronghold, and for the purpose Kitchener had at his disposal four battalions of British troops, viz. the Seaforth and Cameron Highlanders and the 1st Lincolns and Warwicks. Then also with him was the whole Egyptian Army, both fellahin and Sudanese.

Commanding the British contingent was Sir William Gatacre, who for thirty years had won distinction in his country's service in India, while at the head of the Sirdar's own forces was Sir Archibald Hunter, than whom, perhaps, no man living has seen more strenuous African service. Lord Kitchener's Chief of Staff was Sir Leslie Rundle, a distinguished officer, who for fifteen years had been closely and intimately associated with his chief; while the intelligence department of the forces was in the able hands of Sir Reginald Wingate and Sir Rudolf Slatin, with whom were associated Lord Edward Cecil and Colonel Maxse.

Our small cavalry force—native cavalry be it understood—was under Reggie Broadwood and Bryan Mahon; and our Camel Corps was commanded by Tudway, whose name was made familiar to students of Sudan warfare even as far back as 1885, when he performed yeoman service on the famous march across the Bayuda Desert at the time when Colonel Burnaby and General Sir Herbert Stewart met their death. Another of our distinguished cavalry

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officers was Prince Francis of Teck. Our very efficient artillery commander was Colonel Long, who later was so badly wounded at Colenso, in Natal.

Among our regimental commanders of the Egyptian Army, I may mention "Tommy" Townshend, later Sir Charles Townshend of Kut, who had won his C.B. for his defence of the fort at Chitral; Sir John Maxwell, for a long time A.D.C. to the Duke of Connaught; and poor, brave, traduced Hector Macdonald, with others—all distinguished in their country's service. I have given these names in order to show that, although our numbers were small, yet the fighting power comprised within them was immense, and so indeed the event proved.

We had been forced to wait for our Atbara battle for well nigh six weeks, during which time the men and officers, of the British contingent at any rate, had suffered inconceivable hardships. For we had started out from Berber on a forced march with the full thought that Mahmoud was advancing to fight us.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the whole existence of British supremacy in the Sudan and in Egypt itself lay in the issue of the fight that General Kitchener had to wage.

Thanks to the criminal policy adopted by a former British Government, the natives of the Sudan had absolutely no confidence in us, and although they rejoiced at our intervention, which seemed to promise them freedom from the horrible thraldom of the Khalifa and his ruthless Bagara emirs, yet they dreaded lest we might once again retire and abandon them to an even more terrible vengeance than they had before experienced. They were, therefore, perfectly prepared to rise against us in the event of any disaster to our arms, and it should be borne in mind that between us on the Atbara bank and the small British army of occupation in Cairo—wellnigh 1,800 miles

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distant—there was no other force that could cope with an organized rising.

Mahmoud, however, refused to be drawn into an attack, and although we made almost daily reconnaissances, he stubbornly remained behind his bulwarks of mimosa thorn in an almost inaccessible position in the thick bush of the Atbara bank, some forty-five miles from the mouth of that river. And thither we had to follow him.

We started out, therefore, from our camp at Umda-Beah to exterminate this dervish emir. A zareeba built of thorn-bushes and defended by some thousands of lion-hunters and men absolutely fearless, and armed with elephant guns and every other kind of unpleasant weapon of destruction, is not an easy obstacle to tackle. And, therefore, every assistance that could be thought of and devised to make the task easier to our attacking force had been prepared.

Our men, for instance, were provided with leather hand-guards with which to tear away the poisonous thorn branches, and ladders, or rather brattices—which it was intended to throw upon the thorns, so that we might the easier surmount them—had been roughly fashioned; and every third man in our charging line had been instructed to carry his blankets with him, the which to throw upon the zareeba. Kitchener had even gone further. He had caused prickly zareebas to be constructed on the outskirts of our base camp, and the British Brigade, headed by General Gatacre, had been exercised at charging these hedgehog obstacles day after day, with the result that the kilted regiments emerged from the unequal contest more resembling prickly pears than "Hieland Laddies," but with the prickles wrong way in. That, however, made no matter.

Most battles, as all history tells, are fought at dawn, and at a time when all troops engaged are desperately exhausted

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by a long night march. The Atbara was no exception to this unhappy rule.

We paraded at two o'clock on the afternoon preceding our great day, and from then on until five the next morning we were on the move. No one who has not personal experience can realize how cruelly slow is the progress of an army marching through the night, when no lights are permissible, and when no words of command must be given other than in a whisper. On that night of our Atbara adventure I found myself frequently engaged in whispered conversation with one or other friend, who in the middle of a sentence seemed to vanish into space and leave me addressing my remarks to some entirely different person.

Every now and again a halt was perforce called while we pulled ourselves into shape, and, for my part, I will say that my utter weariness was such that on each of these occasions I dismounted, and, stretching myself before my horse's forefeet, snatched a few moments of painful sleep, to be aroused when the advance was resumed by the gentle kicking of my good animal's hoofs in my side.

There is, however, finality to all things, and as the grey dawn broke after that night of weariness, we found ourselves where we should be—exactly half a mile from Mahmoud's zareeba. For a brief time we feared that our enemy had given us the slip, for behind his mimosa hedge we could see nothing but an immense cloud of dust, mingled with the flames and smoke of burning huts.

Not a single man of the dervishes was to be seen, though after a time some few horse and camel men showed themselves on the distant skyline. Later on we found this cloud dust was due to a most curious cause. Nearly every one of Mahmoud's men owned a donkey, and the whole force, on seeing our approach, was engaged in digging small pits in which to shelter these little beasts. After

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the fight we found, I must suppose, more dead donkeys within Mahmoud's stronghold, each with his legs trussed up and bound in his little shelter trench, than have ever before been seen in the history of the world.

But to our fight.

Our whole force of artillery played quite prettily into Mahmoud's zareeba for three-quarters of an hour—just, as Colonel Long said, "to give them an appetite for breakfast," and to these salvos the enemy made no reply. And then it was our turn.

Between ourselves and the zareeba were two ridges of sand and rock, and the plan was that we were to rush these one after the other, and then charge down upon the zareeba and carry it, and thence onward clear the pits and stockades and rifle-trenches, until we had driven the dervishes, or what was left of them, right across the bed of the Atbara.

We did it, of course, but it took some doing.

There was a time of eager and anxious anticipation while we awaited the signal to charge.

At last the call came, and we dashed down the slope to the zareeba. To my mind it would seem that never was there 800 yards of ground covered more quickly; but during that sprinting match, of course, what might have been expected happened. The men who carried blankets dropped them, the men armed with the brattices threw them away, and in less time almost than it takes to narrate, we had torn away that huge hedge of thorn-bush with our hands and were inside and carrying the first stockade.

I was one of the few mounted men in the field, for the Sirdar's orders had been that all officers should be afoot in order not to attract the dervish fire. But as I pointed out to the Sirdar, I am so small a man, that were I dismounted I would be unable to see what occurred and thus do my duty. So I rode through that fight as I have

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done through almost every one in which I have been engaged.

When we got through the zareeba, the roar of fire from the enemy's 20,000 rifles and sporting-guns was, I think, as furious as anything I have known. There was a cross-fire every way, and bombs were being hurled, and spears and darts and daggers, and I think I may quite safely say that for an hour at least that morning was quite sufficiently exciting for any but the most exotic taste.

But we carried the position. How could we do otherwise with the whole of Egypt behind us to be rescued from the dominion of the Khalifa ?

I have been a lucky man in scraps always, and fortune befriended me once again on this occasion. We had reached the second stockade—with of course a good many casualties —when of a sudden I heard my name called amid the shouting. (It was not till then that I gathered that I myself was shouting as was everyone.) Major Ramsden, Adjutant of the Seaforth Highlanders, was calling to me.

"Scuddy," he cried, "you're on horseback and can see. Is there a doctor anywhere about? The Colonel's wounded, and I want to get him fixed up. I *must* get along to my men."

I looked all around, and of course could see nothing but spikes and spears and smoke and flashes of flame, and told him so.

"But," I said, "if you'll leave him to me I'll first-aid him. Only I can't lose my horse. You must give me a man to hold him."

This was soon done. Ramsden found one of his own Seaforths and brought him over. "You do whatever Mr. Scudamore tells you," he said; and thanking me, hurried away through the smoke.

Colonel Murray had got a bullet in the left elbow joint—a necessarily very painful wound, as the slightest movement

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was agonizing. He held on to the stockade with the other hand while I did my best for him, and the Seaforth man held on to my horse, who didn't want to stand still.

I had nearly finished my task when suddenly the soldier, with a cry something between a scream and a roar, dropped my bridle and plunged through the broken stockade. I followed, and found that he had earned the thanks of both Murray and myself: for facing us behind the stockade in a small rifle-pit was squatted an earnest follower of the Khalifa—now harmless, thanks to our Seaforth friend's bayonet—armed with an elephant gun (one of those introduced into the Sudan by Sir Samuel Baker years before), with a big cushion on the butt to soften the kick. The poor dear chap, it appeared, knowing he could have but one shot, had been waiting his opportunity to get both Murray and me with his four-ounce ball. He was just too late.

I may mention incidentally that after the campaign I took that elephant gun, with spears and swords, and shirts of mail and many other trophies,with me to Constantinople, where I very often lived for long periods.

Arrived at the Customs, where I was very well known to all the officials, I was mildly chaffed by many of them to whom I exhibited my prizes. "We have no objection, Mr. Scudamore," they said, "to spears and suits of Crusaders' and Saracen armour, but there is a well-established law which prohibits the introduction of cannon by private individuals into His Majesty's dominions."

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CHAPTER XIX

SOME MEMORIES OF OMDURMAN

A day of incident. The Sirdar's plans justified. Wingate and Slatin's fine intelligence service. "Fighting Mac" shows us some fighting. I and my comrades gain the Khor Shamba. The breach in the wall. The Khalifa's quarters. Hubert Howard. Night on the execution ground. The telegram to Queen Victoria. The Mahdi's tomb and catafalque. A fair division. The inception of the Gordon Memorial College.

OMDURMAN, THE CROWNING TRIUMPH of Kitchener's three years' war against the Khalifa Abdullahi, could not, I suppose, be called a great fight in the strict sense of the term. From the point of view of a brilliant scrap, the attack earlier in the year (April 8th) on Mahmoud's zareeba on the Atbara River was a much more satisfying affair. Maybe an attack on a strongly held position is necessarily more exciting than a defensive action when you are yourself strong. Anyhow, that gorgeous Atbara fight was quite exciting enough.

I was in practically every fight, fought in the Sudan, between the 4th of February, 1884, and the 2nd of September, 1898, and with the exception of the first occasion (Valentine Baker's Teb), which was merely a massacre of our inefficient force, the Atbara was, I think, the hottest action of the whole list.

The Sirdar's complete and remarkable success at Omdurman was none the less a signal triumph—a triumph of patient organization, untiring labour, meticulous preparation, and forethought amounting to genius; in unex-

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pected aid of all of which Kitchener and his advisers were vouchsafed a colossal stroke of luck, in the shape of the preposterous blunder committed by the Khalifa. Yet even this blunder was but the result of another triumphant piece of work on the part of Sir Reginald Wingate and Sir Rudolf Slatin, who had throughout the long war so ably run the intelligence department of the army.

For it was the marvellous knowledge of native character possessed by these two officers, coupled with their extraordinarily able control and employment of their agents in the enemy camp, that induced the Khalifa's emirs to attack us in daylight, where we stood with our backs to the Nile, instead of waiting to be attacked themselves within their rabbit warren stronghold of Omdurman.

This, of course, is what they should have done, and what we expected them to do. For weeks, indeed, this question had afforded matter for constant discussion during our final advance from the Atbara base. It was the daily topic of talk with every soldier friend that I met—and I think that at this time I knew every officer in the Egyptian and Sudanese forces fairly well—and moreover Slatin and Wingate—nay, even the Sirdar himself talked with complete freedom on the subject—the concensus of opinion being that if the dervish played the game, as no doubt he would do, we were in for a week of street fighting, with a practical certainty of a very heavy casualty list. This last conclusion was inevitable. For according to Slatin, who of course knew them by heart, the labyrinthine lanes of Omdurman were in innumerable cases less than 4 feet wide, and the mud walls of the houses were some 2 feet thick, with very narrow entrances, and maybe a foot square window hole. Within these little block-houses, one or two fanatical Ansari, who had been carefully taught, as had they all, that if they surrendered they were not likely to get their money returned at the door, so to speak,

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could make themselves extremely unpleasant, and do a lot of mischief before they took their departure for "the gardens of delight."

Many quite judicious critics anticipated a loss for us of from 5,000 to 6,000—a heavy toll on a total strength of 18,000 men.

All these grave apprehensions were dissipated by Wingate's clever strategy. I have mentioned elsewhere how on September 1st, when Broadwood's cavalry reconnoitred almost up to the walls of Omdurman, the sight of us lunching on the top of the "round hill" brought the whole dervish force streaming out of the city in pursuit. This pursuit they kept up until some time after dark—long after we had got back to where the army lay on the river bank.

Then they took a rest for prayer and food, and it was now that Wingate's clever agents got to work. Perhaps their task was made the easier from the fact that the Sudanese—brave as they are—have no stomach for night fighting. In all the Sudan fighting in which I have taken part I cannot recall a single instance of a night attack by the enemy. In daylight they would attempt anything and always gallantly, but the dark seemed to baffle them. Anyhow, Wingate's agents succeeded in persuading the emirs that we intended to attack them soon after midnight, and this determined them to sit tight where they were and fix up such defences as might be possible while awaiting the event. It appeared also that Wingate's fellows dissuaded them from attempting to get back to Omdurman, lest we should overtake them on the way and throw them into disorder.

Of course, this decision was the worst they could have taken. The night was pitchy dark, with some rain. They were 65,000 men against our 18,000, of whom one-half were the same material as themselves. Thus by

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sheer weight of numbers they might have done us considerable hurt, as even in daylight—as next day proved—not a few of our "good old blacks" (in their enthusiasm) took no account of their sights, but with feverish joy kicked up the sand at 400 yards while the advancing enemy was still 1,500 yards away.

However, the dervishes sat tight, and throughout the hours we could hear their cries and shouts, and the throbbing of their drums and the raucous moans of their ombéyas. There was no doubt about it: they were full of beans.

And when their fanatical enthusiasm was at its apogee, Wingate's men got at them again, with the news that we had got the wind up, and that the fire of our gunboats, which were shelling Omdurman, was to cover the Sirdar's preparations—if not for a retirement, at least for a withdrawal to the east bank of the river.

How far these arguments influenced Abdullahi and Ali Wad Héllu and the rest I am not able to say, but anyhow the whole dervish force at once advanced to the attack.

I think that most of us realized—when in the first light of the dawn we beheld that wonderful display of savage valour—that Abdullahi's hosts were delivered into our hands. My own dominant impression was that this furious attempted onslaught by these wild, brave, fanatical hosts —upheld by religious conviction in the righteousness of their cause—was the most magnificent and terribly beautiful spectacle I had ever contemplated. They did not march. They leapt towards us on a close packed solid front, with countless banners waving and horns blaring and lofty raised standards, making no sort of attempt to take advantage of such cover as might exist—scorning it in fact and delighting in exposure. One could but admire this final foolish effort of Mahdi-ism—the swan song of a

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lost cause—and regret the necessity we were under to either kill or be killed.

It was patently obvious from the first that they had not an earthly chance against the machine guns and volleys of our British brigades, and although throughout the whole of their advance they kept up a heavy fire against us, it was even more erratic than that of our own "dear old blacks," whom I have mentioned, and did little or no harm.

I remembered Admiral Sir William Hewett telling me that after Ulundi he had measured the distance from our square reached by the nearest fallen Zulu, and had found it to be 80 yards. After this first Omdurman fight, therefore (we had three that day), I attempted to measure the distance between our firing line and the nearest swathe (for they fell in swathes, like cut corn) of fallen dervishes. I made it out to be about 200 yards. But then, of course, in Zulu war days our rifles were less perfect and our use of them was perhaps less instructed; and as for machine guns—well, the Hotchkiss, and the Gardner (which had surely by rights another name) were by no means infallible, while the Gatling was perhaps the least reliable weapon ever invented,with the exception of the French mitrailleuse of 1870. My own experience of the Gatling is that it always jammed at the precise moment when it was imperative that it should do its best. Of course, this may not have been the fault of the weapon. Indeed, I have known a Gatling to perform a surprising feat on one occasion. It had been captured temporarily, and a semi-nude warrior was dancing wildly on the hopper. This maybe irritated the machine, for suddenly it blew up, and that savage went aloft in astonishment and many fragments. Still, you couldn't expect a Gatling to do that for you every time, even in those days when expense was no object.

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It is not my purpose to describe the battle of Omdurman or to revive old controversies. It was in every way a great day, a day of episodes. All sorts of criticism was launched against the Sirdar's action in pushing his main forces on towards Omdurman, while neglecting the fact that he left behind him the unblooded force of Ali Wad Héllu—12,000 strong—to attack his rearguard on the north side of Kerreri Hill. Of course, this criticism was just nonsense and the outcome of the petty spite that in military as in civilian life assails the successful man. There was a cry that Hector Macdonald—who was in command of our rearguard—had adjusted Kitchener's blunder and was the true saviour of the day at Omdurman.

Of course it was not so. Kitchener knew perfectly well where Ali Wad Héllu and his 12,000 valiants had placed themselves, and knew equally well that Macdonald and "Taffy" Lewis, and Tudway of the Camel Corps, with assistance from Broadwood, were fully competent to deal with him. His own business was to push on to Omdurman before the enemy—broken, but by no means crushed—could get back there to give us that feast of street fighting that must cost so dear. That was the chief need.

With G. W. Steevens of the *Daily Mail* and Will Maud of the *Graphic*, I was riding gaily along the river bank beside the 3rd Grenadiers and the Fighting Fifth, when suddenly a terrific outburst of fire from the neighbourhood of Kerreri, in our rear, claimed our attention.

"Hullo! That must be Mac," we exclaimed, and Steevens—I think it was he—galloped to the top of a low hill to prospect.

"There's something on," he cried; "can we get there?" We thought we could, and we did. We had to gallop through the enemy, who were coming on in great shape, but we got into the square Macdonald had formed in excellent time.

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We found Macdonald, dismounted and walking about, very gleeful in his usual grim way.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am delighted to welcome you, and I think I can show you some good sport."

And he did; indeed, at one time it was quite lively sport, while for Tudway and his Camel Corps it was very nearly too hot.

But all things come to an end, and after about an hour everything was all right. And then, inasmuch as the business of war corresponding (before the trade went into forced liquidation) meant being in about nineteen different places at once if possible, we felt it our duty to treck on again and rejoin the advancing columns. So after a cheery good-bye from "Mac" we started off.

It was a weary day that 2nd of September. But I at least was amongst the lucky ones. I had half a dozen spare horses, which would have served me nothing if not available; but I had also a faithful and devoted head camel man—a Jaälin tribesman with the vision of a vulture—who throughout all that crowded day managed to keep track of me wherever I went, and not only followed me as closely as possible, but brought with him my Says with the led horses. He and they kept tactfully a little in the background, but were always able to come up to me when I halted and signalled to them. Thus I was well served, and was able to help my two messmates.

We rode back over the stricken field—it was not too stricken to make nasty going for us—and after some trouble found ourselves up with the Sirdar's staff just in time to hear the great man give vent to some of the most violent expressions of disgust and anger—in English and Arabic—that probably he ever used in his life.

It was those dear joyous "old blacks" again. A little bodyguard of them marched in front of the Sirdar. This was a very necessary precaution on a field where, when a

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dozen enemy fanatics ran towards you crying "*Aman*," which means mercy, you never knew whether they meant it, or merely intended to go to glory with the added merit of having slaughtered a white man. Well, something of this kind occurred. Two or more *bejibba'd* Ansari dashed up towards Kitchener, who was no doubt quite prepared to be clement. But the "old blacks" were dubious, and following the good old rule of when in doubt play a trump, they let them have a volley—directed as it chanced against the whole Headquarters Staff.

It was quite a lively moment, and there were a few casualties. Kitchener's proverbial luck saved him, but he was very angry.

It was a great day, that 2nd of September—a gorgeous day in many ways. There wasn't a dull moment from the time when the first green and black dervish standards appeared leaping upon the horizon until we laid our weary heads down on the befouled and stinking soil of the Khalifa's execution ground, outside Omdurman, late in the night.

For many hours half a dozen actions were in progress in the wide Kerreri plain, and so involved were they that now and again friends were directing lively independent fire against others of their own side. I rode behind the Sirdar during that time when Frankie Rhodes got his packet in the shoulder and Sir Arthur Sloggett received that bullet through the heart, from which he so marvellously recovered, and heard the vehement protests of Tullibardine, who having come over from Broadwood (of the cavalry) with a message to the chief, and made a very rough passage through the enemy throng, was sternly prohibited by Lord Kitchener from making any attempt to rejoin his corps. The Gyppy army, making a wide detour out into the plain, was pushing on at frenzied speed (a speed no white troops could have maintained in that heat) towards

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Abdullahi's capital, its aim being to thrust off and away the great mob of 30,000 to 40,000 dervishes who were striving to reach Omdurman before us. It was a running fight—a long series of running fights, with but little vantage to either side. At our backs—behind Kerreri Hill—"Fighting Mac" was still dealing with the stubborn remnants of Ali Wad Héllu's legion; and all the time the British brigades were slogging along on the Nile bank (with a hundred little fights on their hands—fought without slackening speed) towards our common goal.

Having been, I think I may fairly say, mostly everywhere, I galloped over to the river again and joined the British.

For white men, one-half of them less than three months in the country, and carrying each man from 30 to 40 pounds (they had no packs of course), it must have been about the most gruelling experience that had yet been recorded in history. The sun temperature was anything between 165° and 180° F., and the pace was terrific.

People talk of Robert's forced march to Kandahar, and knowing the official record, I asked (on that day) of a man who had taken part in that historic feat what he believed had been the average daily mileage during that great trek. With vivid memories of his sufferings, he answered in all good faith: "Oh, I don't suppose we ever made more than forty-five miles a day." He was, I am certain, perfectly sincere in his belief. But as a matter of fact, the official military figure was "fifteen and a quarter miles on marching days." So may men deceive themselves under stress of cruel exertion. So perhaps it may have been with us. But the conditions! Even the Long Valley on a June day, where men on a route march are one and all choked by the dust kicked up by their comrades, is trying enough. And if you take that scurry along the bank of Father

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Nile, it is quite sufficient to multiply one thousandfold the Long Valley peculiarities.

Malesch! Our fellows slogged it, and but few men fell out. I was in luck—several of my spare horses had got up to me, and my faithful Kemal-ed-din on his tall camel hovered ever near me. Then I was able to be of some little use to a number of wearied chaps in my vicinity. A glance from a spent bullet on my shin-bone (whose full significance I did not realize for some days) debarred me from doing much on foot, but I was still able to give a lift now and again to many exhausted Tommies (no officer of course would accept it), and I recall that as we approached the Khor Shamba, I was riding loose-footed with fifteen rifles across my knees and with two weary men on each side hanging on to my stirrup leathers. So we got on.

At the Khor Shamba itself, I think, was the worst time, not only for the exhausted soldiers, but also for all of us whose voices had influence. It was dead water, dull yellow brown, and of the thickness of pea soup, and it stunk as only rotten water in a sun-stricken land can stink. Moreover, in it one could see floating and shining greasily above the surface the swollen, broken carcasses of beasts and men. But it was water, and every man craved to drink.

Protests, curses, brutalities were needed to prevent our poor parched fellows from soaking themselves with this deadly poison.

Indeed, there were many cases where no argument could prevail.

* * * * *

At the Khor Shamba my messmates and I left the bulk of the British forces to bathe their feet, to lave their dust-choked bodies in the filthy dead water—which at least was wet—and to rest awhile, soothed by the soundful lullaby of the persistent bombardment of the Khalifa's

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inner stronghold, maintained by Beatty and Colin Keppel and their colleagues from our stern-wheeler gunboats under the east bank of the river.

My two messmates and I, however—we had managed to stick together—pushed on towards the Khalifa's city, which was now well within sight. We scambled and stumbled, at sore risk of broken pasterns, over the black broken cotton soil, map-fretted with fissures, and the alternating patches of deep rolling sand. A black battalion led us, of course. The "dear old blacks" were always put in front, because they knew so well how to deal with minor contingencies.

At length we drew near to the wall of the citadel (that is the best name I can find for it), and from then on—for a time I find my memories somewhat kaleidoscopic. I recall vividly the pitiful advance towards us of a small host of Omdurmanlis—old white-bearded men marshalling a mob of shrilling women and children. (We told Slatin Pasha afterwards that it was a deputation of his fathers-in-law bringing a selected assortment of wives and families to welcome papa home. But this of course was libel.) I recall resting against a hummock of refuse—the three of us, Steevens, Maud, and self—idly watching the effect of our shell-fire against the great wall of Abdullahi's inner fort 50 yards ahead. Some wall to destroy with field gun-fire—28 feet high, 15 feet thick at base, and 9 to 10 at the top, and all solid mud—nothing to make an easy breach in in those pre-H.E. days. Hubert Howard (he was representing *The Times*) joined us here—jubilant, triumphant, crowing over us all, as indeed he had a right to do. He had ridden with the 21st Lancers in their charge, and proclaimed gloriously that he had had "the time of his life."

Poor Hubert was utterly exhausted, and half mad with thirst, as we all were; and at this psychological moment up loomed through the dust and the flicking bullets my

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faithful Kemal-ed-din on his tall camel, bearing its heavenly burden of under-saddle canvas buckets holding pleasant bottles. There was lager, and there was whisky, and little tins of Brand's essence and other matters—all cool and comforting; but alas! there were no fizzy waters, neither soda nor Rosbach. This was distressful, for albeit we other three sinners were more than content, poor Hubert Howard, a perfervid teetotaller, was left in the cart. Nothing would move him, and despite my urgent protests (I had no Berchfeldt here) he insisted on slaking his burning thirst with the muddy water in the canvas pails.

Another blurred memory is of our next advance into the stronghold, the breach in the great wall having been effected. This place, I should say, was the Khalifa's own quarter, where he dwelt surrounded and guarded by some 8,000 Mulazimin, all Bagarra of his own Et Taïshi tribe. We rode past the great widely opened *Beit el Mal*—the vast treasure compound, wherein (in order to keep his people in subjection) the whole produce of the country was stored. I recall mountains of dates, 80 feet high, and half an acre in extent—the harvest of six or more years—and all rotten and stinking and worthless; vast accumulations of grain, and of senna and thousands of mat sacks, stuffed with gums and with ostrich plumes, all ruined and worthless. But this was the primitive Bolshevism, perfected twenty years later by Lenin and his fellow abominables. We rode along a broad causeway over which the Nile had lapped here and there in pools. The lanes and alleys to our right bubbled with sounds as of a multitude, but few people were in evidence. At the edge of one 8-inch pool a little naked child was on its hands and knees as though crawling. Nigger children, like baby camels, baby wild boars, and baby giraffes, are among the prettiest creatures in the world. I dismounted to lift this little thing to a safer position, and not till I touched the soft black velvet skin did I discover

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that life had left it. How, why, who shall say? for there was neither wound nor bruise nor blemish on its pretty rounded body.

We turned in through an archway and along a wider road towards a place whence came tumultuous sounds. There was hottish fire here, and a vast shouting, and our "old blacks" seemed very busy. As we moved forward through the struggling mob, I found that I was now in the "Iron Mosque," at one corner of which rose the rude domed tomb of the Mahdi, with beside it the house—palace if you will—of the Khalifa. The Iron Mosque itself was a great open space—a rough square—around whose three sides were long lean-to's roofed with broad strips of corrugated iron (hence the name). The ground beneath these shelters was strewn with rushes, and scattered among these lay thousands of copies of the Quran—all bound in red leather. Beside the Khalifa's house a young lion, tethered by a thin leather thong to a wooden pin stuck in the mud wall, moved restlessly to and fro.

Much was to do within this enclosure. From adjacent lanes came a great noise of hand-to-hand fighting. Our dervishes were difficult to deal with. Most were defiant, preferring to die fighting; but even when they claimed *aman*, and half ventured a surrender, as often as not they would change their minds at the last moment and elect to run amok.

We had a tiresome half-hour, enlivened, however, by the frequent wild scurrying across the mosque square of a flock of the Khalifa's chickens. This made a diversion, for many of our men would at once desist from their battle struggle to capture a fowl for the pot.

Kitchener rode in with his staff and various of his leaders, Archibald Hunter among them, and both shamble-fighting and chicken-scurry seemed to stop almost at once. Every "old black" who had snaffled a hen tucked it deftly by the

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neck into his belt behind him and stood grinning in wide-mouthed devotion towards the beloved Chief. And then an annoying thing happened—it was a day of episodes. From somewhere to westward came a shell, glinted the cupola of the Mahdi's tomb, and burst in our midst. There were some casualties among our smiling Sudanese. And then came another shell and another, and more and more.

It was not properly understandable, until Archie Hunter picked up a large broken fragment, and examining it, said to the Sirdar in his usual tired voice: "Beg pardon, sir, but these are our own shells." It was true, and by now our joyous gunners were warming to their work and enjoying it.

"Well, gentlemen," said Kitchener crisply, "I don't see how we can stop it; and it would be a pity to lose our tickets when the day is won. I am afraid we must give them the honour." With this he began to move off.

It was imperative, in my opinion, to stick to the Sirdar—a matter of getting work passed by the censorship. Moreover, night was falling, and at Omdurman in September night falls like a rocket stick out of a golden sky. At the time I was sitting on horseback, a red Quran under each thigh, and another in my shirt, holding the reins of Steevens's, Maud's, and Hubert Howard's horses. They were all rummaging among the rushes for choice specimens of saved literature as souvenirs. I yelled to them, and as each ran up threw him his bridle. Hubert Howard was the last, and the General's staff was just vanishing through the gateway when he came up. I flung him his reins, and as I turned a last shell burst just above us. A splinter took off my pony's left ear, and it needed a moment or so to quiet the poor beast. And then a black orderly ran to me saying that my friend was killed.

A moment later Archie Hunter, always generously helpful, rode back to me.

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"There's nothing to be done, Scudamore," he said. "I'll see that he is taken care of. You'd better stick to the Chief."

I hurried after my messmates and the vanishing staff.

* * * * *

Slatin Pasha had gone off with the cavalry in pursuit of the Khalifa (who had bolted), and no one else—who was available—knew the topography of Omdurman. As a result, following the Sirdar and his great men, and a half battalion of the Fighting Fifth, whom we picked up outside the big wall, we found ourselves at length in a wide open space of most unsavoury ground.

It was not till next day that we discovered that this was the Khalifa's execution place, where in the past twelve years he had put to death many thousands of victims by various hideous means.

Here the Sirdar elected to pass the night. The decision was undoubtedly a forced one. From all over the place of the recent battle, wounded and unwounded dervishes were streaming back to Omdurman under cover of the darkness; the air was full of loud cries and calls, wailings of women and clamant appeals to Allah for vengeance on us. The day was won doubtless, but it was not a night to go wandering about upon a field peopled by some 30,000 to 40,000 savage vanquished fanatics. Moreover, our half battalion of Northumberlands was here, and every man of us all was utterly exhausted.

Came a time when the Sirdar desired to send to Her Majesty Queen Victoria—and also, of course, to our traitor friend the Khedive Abbas Hilmi Pasha—the brief announcement of his victory, and over this a difficulty arose. Everything had got lost, or at least temporarily misplaced, and on this pitchy black night there was among all the men of G.H.Q. no lamp or torch or candle, by whose light the

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great news might be recorded on paper. Even my own ubiquitous Kemal-ed-din had not yet tracked me down—nor did he for some hours—and we were all in darkness. Rawlinson (now Lord Rawlinson and C.-I.-C. in India) and Lord Edward Gleichen and others of the staff stumbled around on that blood-soaked Golgotha, asking one man after another if he possessed a candle or a torch. When, however, I was approached, I recalled that, albeit a non-smoker, I carried always a box of wax matches (those big ones) in my holster. As a rule I never needed them, and the natural thing would have been that in this emergency they would be absent. But they weren't. Fortune favoured me. I found the box and handed it over.

And then—as "founder of the feast" so to speak—I was permitted to witness a pretty and historic scene.

Wingate lay on his stomach on the ground. On either side of him knelt Gleichen and Rawlinson, striking match after match, while behind his head Kitchener squatted on his haunches, and dictated to him the brief message of victory that should tell Her Majesty that Mahdism was broken and Omdurman was won.

In the background, the gloomy Von Wissman, the German Military Attaché, and the genial Count Calderera (our Bimbashis called him "Candelabra" for short) stood witness to the dramatic transaction.

We had a wild night of it on that execution ground. I have been in many strange and oft-times disconcerting situations—positions that, until came the World War that blurred out every former horror, were so poignant as to linger for all time in the memory. But, as I have said, the World War has overlaid every sinister happening that civilization has known, and albeit to the man who gets his packet, it makes little difference whether its occasion was a small frontier scrap or a battle that might reshape a

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hemisphere, the World War with its machinery abominations has undoubtedly dwarfed every fight that preceded its unutterable bestialities.

Exhausted though we were, there was no sleep for anyone in that horrible bivouac. One lay uneasily and wide-eyed—not I only, but everyone in that small company. Of course it was cold—it is always cold at night in the Sudan—and as we had no blankets with us, that also was a disturbing factor. From time to time, when in sheer weariness I got up from my saddle pillow and walked about to take the numbness out of my feet, I found always one or two of the Sirdar's staff engaged in the same dismal recreation. It was not that we were in any anxiety. We had our guards—Fifth Northumberlands and Sudanese all around us—and would have had ample warning of any impending happening. But it was eerie, it was uncanny. The whole air was filled with the diverse noises of the aftermath of a day of slaughter. From the desert beyond came the tumultuous whisperings of thousands of beaten men, many of them wounded, striving to guide each other back into the city we had conquered, by secret ways known only to themselves. The main battlefield was nigh eleven miles away, but the wailings of the countless women who had hurried out to it—so soon as night fell—were borne to us on the night breeze. In the town itself which we had conquered, the nogarras (war drums) were drubbing and throbbing all through the night. There was almost incessant firing, by whom and against what I have never known to this day. From time to time a group of ghostly shapes would loom up in the dark near to where our sentries stood on guard, and at the smart challenge would fade away into the blackness. Sometimes our men fired at these ghosts; more often they merely gave a loud challenge, and the shapes disappeared. It was too dark to write, and no one I think slept. Indeed, it was a mighty

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relief when the cold bitter mist descending on us warned us that dawn was at hand.

Our first duty that morning was to give honourable burial to our colleague Hubert Howard. A message came to me from Sir Archibald Hunter, who, considerate and kindly as always, had arranged everything. Howard had lain that night in the house of the Khalifa Yakoub, Abdullahi's brother, and when we got there, we three (the rest of my colleagues were scattered wide afield), found all in readiness: a half battalion of Sudanese to do him honour, and Mr. Collins, the Guards Chaplain, to read the service. Steevens, Maud, Maxwell (of the *Standard*), who haply turned up, and I, carried the stretcher out to the grave, and Maud and I lifted our friend from it into his bed. Hunter himself and many men of the Sirdar's staff made time to be present. So that was that.

I had made it my business to find out from Wingate the possibilities of sending off dispatches.

The land route by the desert was become impossible by reason of the thousands of wounded—and their friends—who strewed the battleground, and no Government steamer was to leave until some much later hour; so having sent off one brief message by one of my faithful people, who floated down the river on a bundle of grass, with the telegram in his turban, I was able to give an hour or two to a survey of Omdurman.

It was not possible to go far into that labyrinth. But at least my two comrades and I determined to revisit the Iron Mosque, and being there, penetrated into the Mahdi's tomb. It had been badly knocked about, and the heavy iron crescent that surmounted the cupola sagged menacingly over a gaping rent in the frail roof. It threatened to fall and engulf everything in its ruin, and we decided thereupon and before this should happen to possess ourselves of the pall of black cloth embroidered

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with Arabic texts that draped the catafalque of the dead prophet. (In this I think we were robbing no one, for when the roof fell—as it did later—it would have been buried in the ruins.) It was gingerly work to lift it from the wooden frame on which it had rested all those years, but we were proceeding very well when another enterprising visitor put in an appearance. This was Major Finn, of the 21st Lancers. At the moment, I think, he did not greatly appreciate our presence, but we soon came to terms and agreed to share the trophy. One-half then of the pall—or drapery—came to us; the other went to the 21st Lancers, who have had it mounted as a handsome screen for their ante-room. The motto embroidery on their portion is a verse from the Quran, and runs—if my memory carries me—thus :—

They who believe and fear God shall enjoy the life everlasting. They shall be given the gardens of Paradise for their abode, and they shall not be grieved.

Could any Christian wish a better send-off.

Well, that was Omdurman, as I saw it. If I have dwelt at too great length on this old-world, small episode in history, I must crave pardon of my readers. But, after all, these pages only purport to be a sheaf of memories.

Yet of course there is much more that might be written about Omdurman and the events that led up to our victory. But for the fact that this last chapter has been very long—and that I fear to weary readers—I might tell of my first visit to the ruined Government House at Khartoum, where I cut a couple of big branches from the lemon tree that grew beside the broken steps where Gordon met his death.

"Ach ya Melouan! You accursed!" cried the tribesman as he thrust his spear at the General's undefended breast. For Gordon carried no weapon that morning. I might tell of the service we held in memory of the hero,

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at the close of which we hoisted the two flags of England and Egypt over the ruined Konak, and how a friend of mine, an officer of the Fighting Fifth, strolling afterwards along the ruins, dropped a match, after lighting a cigarette to steady his nerves, down a round hole in the flooring, with the result that a great explosion immediately occurred and blew him off the parapet. Apparently the place beneath was a magazine, where sacks of powder had been stored and forgotten through all those twelve years. The sacks had rotted, or been rat-eaten, but the gunpowder had remained, unspoiled in that wonderful climate, and still active for evil.

One matter, I think, I should mention, and that was Lord Kitchener's scheme—no doubt it had long been in his mind—for the foundation of a college, to be named after General Gordon, wherein Sudanese tribemen's sons were to be educated with a view to giving them the intellectual force to act as governors of their own destinies. It was two days after Omdurman when the Sirdar asked all the war correspondents to meet him in order that he might expound his scheme and elicit our help in its fulfilment.

He set forth all he had to say, and there is to-day no need to go back to his arguments because the Gordon College of Khartoum has long since gloriously vindicated his forecast, and has proved how wide-reaching was his wise reasoning as to the ductility and the attributes of the Sudanese, who were always his children.

After explaining his plan, Lord Kitchener said: "Now, gentlemen, you can help me. Let us strike while the iron is hot. I require sixty-five thousand pounds to put this scheme through, and I believe that if you give me your help in your papers, I can get it at once from the British public." He looked at us all round, with his usual half-commanding, half-whimsical smile, and at last his glance fell on me. I

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had certainly known him longer than any correspondent present, though I had no reason to put myself forward on that account. He seemed, however, to call for an expression of opinion.

"Why sixty-five thousand pounds, sir?" I asked. "At this height of your success you can just as well ask a hundred thousand and put your scheme beyond risk of failure. You can command the greater sum just as easily as that you have outlined."

"Well, Scudamore," said the Sirdar, "if you think that is so, put forward an appeal for a hundred thousand, and God bless you if you get it."

It was done, I think, in all our papers, and I believe that I am right in saying that £100,000 was subscribed for the foundation of the Gordon College at Khartoum within the next three weeks.

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CHAPTER XX

ABOUT SOME BROTHER CORRESPONDENTS

Archibald Forbes. O'Donovan and his companions make a happy family. The Bek'dji disobeys orders and suffers. How the capitulations worked six flags. O'Donovan gains the day, and I am disappointed. The Mecca gate. "Your Mad" and his dance. The rescue. Schuver takes Christoferos to Plevna. The brigand keeps us supplied with wines. Christoferos accompanies Schuver to Armenia. Their experiences on Mount Ararat. They perish together on the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Galenga and Sir Philip Rose. Nearly a duel. Mackenzie Wallace and Valentine Chirol. Englander and the Chartist demonstration. David Christie Murray and the cabby. The busman's appreciation. Christie's new silk hat. We drive to Richmond. The night porter at the "Star and Garter." The fire alarm and our exit.

OF COURSE, WAR CORRESPONDING has long been a dead trade, which nothing in this world can ever revive. Its demise was inevitable as a consequence of the development of telegraphy all over the world, with the resultant necessary strict censorship on all press communications. The slow death song began in 1882, when genial Lord Methuen was our censor at Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir. Properly speaking, there should have been censorship in the Balkans in '76. But in that campaign we on the Turkish side used barefacedly to evade all sorts of control—taking the risks—and the Russian Commanders had so profound a contempt for Turkish staff work and intelligence that they allowed vast latitude to Archibald Forbes and McGahan and other brilliant representatives of the great English and American pepars. Yet even so,

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Forbes would have found it impracticable to repeat his great *coup* of 1870 (he was with the Prussians), where in order to hold the line with a continuous message, he interlarded his copy with chapters of the book of Genesis, and thus triumphantly out-distanced all competitors. Nor certainly could he have at any time repeated his feat of the first Boer War, when he serenely commandeered all the relay horses of the military "Dak" between far up country and the coast, and got his story home to the *Daily News* while Whitehall was still gaping for intelligence.

The dark continent has by now been illuminated. It was the last land where a war could be fought against savages, and to-day the savages have achieved the benefits of Western civilization. Even the dreaded Masai (who served Sir H. Rider Haggard so well in many volumes) now study Law on the banks of the Thames, and will soon have the vote in Kenya.

One should speak kindly of the dead, and certainly I have only kindliness in my recollections of those old comrades of mine who carried on that moribund tradition.

An outstanding figure among them all was Edmund O'Donovan of the *Daily News*—I have already mentioned him—the man who after the Russo-Turkish War penetrated into Asia—then as disturbed as it is again to-day—and after prolonged stay in Samarkand and Bokhara, drifted along the bank of the great Amur River till he came to the oasis of Merv, at the time nearly as close sealed as Tibet to Europeans; and after a period of captivity and suspicion rose to be one of the triumvirate rulers of the country.

O'Donovan was an irrepressible man. He did magnificent work for his paper, but in all that he attempted and achieved he allowed full play to the spirit of fun that filled him. He was, I think, a reincarnation of the troubadours of crusading days, and even while engaged on the most

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onerous problems, envisaged all things under the sun from the angle of comedy. I recall how after the Peace of St. Stefano in 1878 he decided that rest and enjoyment were his due, and to gain that end took a house in the wholly Turkish suburb of Kous-Kundjuk, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. As companions he collected some six or seven friends of the war, not worse fellows, perhaps, than himself, but no less wild and irresponsible, and each of a different nationality.

There is no doubt that in that cosmopolitan establishment high jinks were the order of the day. They were all full of money and health and spirits—every kind of spirits—and during the next six months extraordinary stories of the "goings on" of the happy family across the water used to filter into us at the English Club.

My father was a sort of "Uncle" to all the English war correspondents, and to him one day came the landlord of the Kous-Kundjuk house to ask if Mr. Scudamore could help him to get rid of these unruly tenants against whose doings all the quiet folk of the quarter were furiously protesting.

"Do they pay the rent?" asked Mr. Scudamore.

"Alas! your Excellency, they have paid a year in advance."

"Have you any tangible grievance?" was the next question.

No, there was none, but the quiet of the neighbourhood was disturbed.

Soon after, however, chance and the offenders themselves played into the hands of the quiet-loving community. Like all other Turkish villages, Kous-Kundjuk had its Bek'dji, the night watchman, whose mission it was to hammer with an iron shod staff on the stones of all distinguished houses and proclaim the hour of the night and the weather.

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The Bek'dji annoyed the merry family, and having repeatedly invited him to desist—he woke up always just before dawn when they were thinking about going to bed—they captured him one night and pitched him into the Bosphorus. No harm befell him. He floated three miles down on the current and got caught in a fishing-net, and was brought safely to shore. But the outrage gave the villagers their opportunity to take action against the offenders. An order was issued for O'Donovan's arrest, that he might explain his conduct to the local Governor.

Now, in those days we had the capitulations. Those amiable delegates at the recent Peace Conference with Turkey never realized all the harm they did to us, and all the good they did to Turkey, when they abolished last year at Lausanne these "treaties under chapters," which had held good since Byzantine times.

Under the capitulations no Turkish authority might enter a European house save when accompanied by an official of the Embassy to whose country the offender belonged.

Six nationalities were represented in the O'Donovan house, and six flagstaffs creaked above its flat roof.

Thus, when a little posse of police approached the garden gate, with a British kavass as advanced guard, the French flag was immediately run up beside the Union Jack, and the invaders were paralysed. All the little party could do was to make a camp and wait until a fresh authority had been obtained from the French Chancellerie. And when that had been brought, the Austrian flag was displayed beside the others, and the whole procedure had to be repeated.

To make a long story short: the gallant defenders stood the siege until the house looked as though decked for some great international festival, and all the time, though none would have molested them, the besieged inmates hauled up sheep and provisions and cases of wine and beer through

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the first-floor windows, to the immense delight of sympathizing traders, who were all lavishly paid.

But it couldn't last. They had run out of nations. O'Donovan went out on to the verandah over the front door and made an impassioned speech to the international forces beneath ; and when his eloquence was at its height, he fell over into the garden, and was made a prisoner before he regained consciousness. The rest of the party then surrendered, and were haled before the Governor of Scutari to make such explanations as might serve.

I can only imagine that these were satisfactory, for when next I met O'Donovan he was starting out on a mission from the Turkish Government to raise a rebellion of Laz tribes, near Batoum, against the Russians, who had just taken over their territory under the peace treaty.

I was in Cairo in the late summer of 1883, when news came that Colonel Hicks Pasha, who with a little band of British officers commanded the Egyptian forces at Khartoum (Gordon went there in January 1884), was about to make an expedition against the Mahdi, who was approaching the Sudan capital from the south and west and gaining hosts of adherents as he advanced. I applied to Sir John Macdonald (Managing Director of the *Daily News*) for permission to join the Hicks expedition, but he replied that O'Donovan had already put in his claim to the job, and that as senior man he must have it. This, as it proved, was my luck and O'Donovan's misfortune, for he was killed with Hicks and all his men, at el Rahat, in November of that year.

When O'Donovan came out a few weeks later, bringing with him Frank Power, an artist and writer (he became *Times* correspondent and Consul at Khartoum, and was massacred in October 1884 with Colonel Stewart of the 11th Hussars, the French Consul, and a number of Europeans, on their way down the river from Khartoum, by

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treacherous natives on an island near Korti), I accompanied the ill-fated couple to Suakin, the Red Sea port, from which they were to ride by the trade route to Berber. They were, I think, the last Europeans to make that journey before the Osman Digna rebellion broke out.

On the way our steamer put in at Djiddah, which is the pilgrim port for Mecca, and one of the most fanatical towns on the Arabian coast.

We went ashore, of course, and O'Donovan, who loved to roam alone among strange people, broke away and disappeared amid the surging mob that thronged the dark, covered bazaar, while Power and I went to visit the British Consul.

We had lunched with Mr. Jago, and were sitting with him on his shady verandah, when a clatter at the door heralded a visitor in a hurry, and a moment later the son of the Turkish Governor of the town dashed into the drawing-room in a state of great agitation.

"Your friend," he cried, "your subject—your mad—he is lost—lost. He has taken off all his clothings outside the Mecca gate and has hung them on Eve's tomb" (Eve's tomb, a long, green, moss-covered structure plastered with votive rag offerings, lies about 50 yards outside the Mecca gateway, through which no non-Moslem is ever allowed to pass), "and he has walked out towards the Holy City. All the town is out after him, and the bedouin are hurrying from all quarters." The good fellow was distraught, and was quite certain that our "Mad" must by now be carved into a thousand pieces. However, he very readily consented to take out a troop of horse and endeavour to rescue O'Donovan's remains. Indeed, he had already ordered out his men.

And this is what we learned on his return.

The bazaar was in an uproar; a frenzied mob danced and raved about Eve's tomb, pointing with extravagant

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gestures to O'Donovan's coat and trousers and shirt that draped ungracefully that sacred monument; a stream of fanatics, ever increasing, was rushing madly out over the plain and horsemen with flashing spears and swords were converging from all points of the compass upon a dense cloud of dust that hid an evidently large company a mile or so away in the distance.

The Governor's son hurried towards it and forced his way into the midst of the shrieking throng. And there in a little clear space he found O'Donovan, stark naked, save for a pair of brown dog skin gloves, with which he continuously beat his breast, while he tripped to a little lilting dance and sang a loud chant, the words of which were, "To the divle with the Mahdi. To the divle with the Mahdi. I'm Edmund O'Donovan. That's me name."

He was brought back on the crupper of a trooper's horse, the natives following, subdued and reverent.

They had deemed him mad—I do not know that they were far wrong—and therefore under the special care of Allah.

"Bigorrah!" said O'Donovan that evening, while we were being smuggled under escort on board our steamer, "I could have done it, and beaten Dick Burton and Burckhardt and all them fellers, if you'd only left me alone."

* * * * *

In those days, when war correspondents had practically a free hand in writing and the gleaning of information was dependent on individual enterprise, each great journal had a dozen or more representatives in the various fields of operations. The expense to the proprietors was no doubt enormous, but certainly the reading public benefited by the outlay.

Among the *Standard's* representatives—chief among whom in the Balkans was George Henty, later so popular

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as a prolific producer of adventure stories for boys—was O'Donovan's great friend Schuver, very nearly as wild and fearless a spirit as himself. Schuver—I have already mentioned him—was a Dutchman, who had taken up this war work for the sheer love of the fun he derived from it. He was the son and heir of one of the wealthiest men in Holland, from whom indeed awhile later he inherited an income of over £30,000 a year.

Schuver, on our march up to Plevna with the last relief columns, led by Shevket and Kiazim Pasha (the last, the Sultan's brother-in-law), was accompanied by the ex-brigand, whom we had wounded on our ride across the mountains. This fellow, now his devoted henchman, rode always in front of our party, his belt bristling with weapons, and balancing on his knee an immense stone jar—an outsize demijohn of liquor. When we started out from Sofia it had been filled with rum, but as we advanced and this store became depleted, Christoferos used to replenish it where and how he could with anything that came handy : Mastik, Oozo, crude native brandies made from cherries or mishmish, a semi-wild apricot, even Tatle Shiraz, the half-fermented Bulgar wine—all found their way into Christoferos's jug. And I am fain to say that we gratefully accepted the extraordinary mixture and found it good. Certainly it never did us any harm.

After the war, and the Kous-Kundjuk episode, Schuver went off on his own on a trip through the Armenian provinces, parting with O'Donovan at Trebizond; and after wandering all through the villayets of Erzeroum, Bitlis, and Van, found himself near the foot of Mount Ararat, of which mountain he determined to essay the ascent. He found the enterprise hedged about with obstacles from the outset. The natives believe that Ararat is haunted. Even at Etchmiadzin, on the Caucasus slopes of the great hill, which is the fortress home of the Catholikos—the Gregorian

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Pope—and is to Armenians what the Vatican is to members of the Catholic Communion, I have found the monks and priests firmly imbued with the belief that the sacred mountain is ringed about with spirits, whose function is to prevent the curious from climbing to its summit and profaning the ark, which they claimed was still resting there.

As a result, Schuver could obtain no sort of assistance for his project. The dwellers in the plains, whether Turks or Greeks, Armenians or Kurdes or Georgians, refused with one accord even to penetrate the lower foothills, and no offer of generous pay made them by Schuver could bring them to alter their decision.

Thus—*à bout de patience*—our Dutch adventurer found himself faced with the alternative of abandoning his project or making the attempt with only the faithful Christoferos as helper. He chose the last, and of course was doomed to failure from the start.

They loaded themselves with as much food as they could carry—it would not have lasted them many days—and armed with axes and saws and coils of rope set forth on their task. They found the lower slopes clothed with a dense growth of tangled brushwood and juniper, almost impenetrable, through which they literally had to hack their way. They found bear paths now and again, it is true, but these were false guides and led in lateral directions rather than upwards. So that when after six days of heart-breaking toil they at length reached a wide open space in the scrub, they were broken men, utterly exhausted and disappointed.

From the account Schuver gave me of it, this place of rocks would seem to have been the sort of configuration depicted on the stage in Faust's Walpurgis night on the Brocken. And the experiences of the couple, according to both explorers, were strictly in keeping with that

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environment. Christoferos's demijohn, which contained but little when they entered the scrub country, had long since been abandoned empty, and for days the pair had eaten little and drunk nothing stronger than tea; and certainly neither Schuver nor his henchman was the sort of man to be frightened by shadows or to fall a prey to idle superstitions.

They had gone to sleep, Schuver told me, beside their fire. It was a moonlit night. Suddenly they were awakened by the clash of battle all around them. Wild horsemen leapt from crag to crag and furious duels were fought in mid air. Little troops of men in strange dress advanced (as though to the attack) through the impenetrable juniper scrub as easily as though on open ground. From a deep narrow ravine (which Schuver had hoped to negotiate on the morrow) came sounds of loud lamentations and agonised cries of women. And on its far side appeared lions and great apes and buffaloes, ranged together apparently to defend the upper slopes of the mountain. However extravagant all this may appear to be, I could have no doubt that Schuver and the Albanian were absolutely convinced that they had not dreamed, but had seen these manifestations.

Anyhow, they were so deeply impressed by the vision, that at dawn they abandoned their climb and made their way in haste down the mountain by the path they had cut for their ascent.

(I believe that Lord Bryce, at a later date, made an ascent of Ararat. But I have not read the account of his experiences.)

* * * * *

There were other outstanding figures among those old-time correspondents: Gallenga of *The Times*, who had been for years one of Delane's chief lieutenants and very

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able leader writers. Gallenga did not go up country. Had he done so, indeed, evil would probably have befallen him, for he was a most atrabilious person, and had ever a furious quarrel on his hands against somebody by whom he deemed himself offended. The story had preceded his arrival that Gallenga had in youth been a noted Italian conspirator, and that he had been drawn by lot to murder Victor Emmanuel. This, indeed, led to a terrific shindy between the *Times* man and Sir Philip Rose (that great pillar of the Tory Party) that narrowly escaped ending in a duel.

The encounter took place at Missiri's Hotel, where both men were staying. Dinner was over and most of the tourist crowd had disappeared, but my father and I lingered with our guests over dessert, and at the far end of the table Sir Philip and Gallenga faced each other. And suddenly the acrimoniously polite argument that they had carried on throughout the meal broke into a storm of passion. Gallenga was an ugly man of the peevish monkey type and with immense false teeth, and something he said, in the harsh, grating metallic voice he used when malignantly inclined, roused the urbane and dignified baronet to fury.

"Sir," said Sir Philip in a cold clear voice that rang through the big room, "you are still an assassin at heart."

There was a pause—and then a crash. Gallenga had seized the heavy decanter of red wine that stood before him and hurled it straight at the Baronet's head.

Which of them jumped the table I didn't see. Neither was young, but both were very active, and before we could get to them they were at it hammer and tongs; and when we did get them separated they made a picture. The bosom of Sir Philip's dress-shirt was a big crimson splash—wine, not blood—while Gallenga, whose teeth

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had been dislodged in the fray, looked more like a drowned baboon than ever.

It took quite a lot of trouble and the mediation of Ambassador and Consul-General and others to adjust that little *contretemps*.

Other famous *Times* men who made long sojourn in Constantinople in those years—'76–'80—were Sir Donald McKenzie Wallace and Marie Valentine Chirol. The latter, quite young, was already very grave and earnest, with a fine stately figure and a handsome tawny head and close-trimmed beard. He lived at the club, and always came down to *dejeuner* armed with a parcel of the more serious reviews, in several languages, one or other of which he propped against the wine caraffe (which he seldom used for any other purpose) and read until he would be drawn into conversation by the magic talk of Dr. Englander, who was irresistible. Then he would come out of his shell of shy reserve and delight us all.

Englander himself was one of the most remarkable men I have ever met. A great journalist—greater I would say than de Blowitz, *The Times* Paris pride—it was he who had been the coadjutor of Baron Reuter of Hessecassel when he founded the vast news-distributing organization which still bears his name. The Doctor came to Turkey as first representative of Reuter's in the Near East, and his pupil and assistant Mr. Werndel, who succeeded him, was down to and after the Great War (albeit a German) one of the best liked and most respected men in the British community.

Dr. Englander had an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes. He had been a friend of Heinrich Heine in Paris, and described to me how every morning he used to sit by the couch of the invalid and discuss humanities. But he added, "I never had any more than an hour or so of Heinrich's society, for after lunch I was invariably driven

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forth by the influx of a bevy of lovely impassioned admirers of the sick poet, all furiously jealous of each other."

Englander fell foul of the French Authorities in Paris—politics of course—and one day received a visit from the *Chef de la Surété* with an intimation that he was to be deported, and would be escorted forthwith to whichever frontier he preferred.

"Of course," said Englander, "I chose Calais. I had never seen England, and it was the land of the free." He came to London, and it chanced that the day following his arrival was that appointed for the great Chartist demonstration in London's streets. Full of enthusiasm, he joined the marching throng. But his ardour soon weakened. His *roquelaure* cloak, comic opera hat, and general facial characteristics were peculiarly un-English, and attracted unpleasant attentions from those around him. 'Ose the b——y furriner?" was the most complimentary of the comments passed on him by his neighbours, who at length so beset him that he was forced to appeal to the police. He was taken to the lock-up for his own protection, and when he got there found that the champions of liberty had relieved him of his purse and his watch and chain.

* * * * *

A specially bright and joyous spirit of those old days was my friend David Christie Murray, the novelist. He also did brilliant work through the campaign for *The Times* and the *New York Herald*. But before he received his appointment to those great journals he went through a rough experience in the Sultan's capital. The paper that sent him out failed almost before he reached the Turkish shore, and knowing no one, he was for a time left stranded and wholly without resources. For a while, indeed, he told me, he was fain to seek shelter at night in the caïques that lay moored beside the Galata Bridge.

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But he survived these trials, survived also the terrible malaria (through which I nursed him) that tortured him throughout that Balkan summer, and together we went up to Plevna with a small company, which included Alexander McKellar, the famous St. Thomas's surgeon, who afterwards became chief medical officer of the Metropolitan Police.

At that time there was, so far as my knowledge goes, only one British man in Ghazi Osman Pasha's camp. This was Charles (to us "Micky") Ryan, a young Australian doctor who had offered his services to the Turks. Osman and Tewfyk Pashas became very fond of Ryan, and although the Turkish Commander-in-Chief turned us all out of Plevna a few days before its fall, for which I for one am very grateful to him, they never forgot the assistance Dr. Ryan had given them.

Indeed, at a later date he was made Turkish Consul-General at Melbourne and loaded him with favours and decorations.

In 1915, when General Ryan accompanied the Australian forces to Europe as principal medical officer, he was permitted to wear all his Turkish medal ribbons.

When I last heard from Sir Charles Ryan, a few months ago, he emphasized the fear that he and I were the only survivors of the little group of Britons who knew Plevna in its siege days.

Christie Murray and I remained always friends from that time until his death. He did no more campaigning after Turkey, but there his vivid descriptions attracted great attention—so much attention, indeed, that they came to the notice of Sultan Abdul Hamid, who promptly had him apprehended at the front, in Mehemet Ali's camp (he had Mehemet Ali poisoned later), escorted to the coast, and put on board a steamer, with injunctions never to come to Turkey any more.

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We met, however, frequently, when I chanced to be in England, and I think that until the end he remained the whimsically eccentric fellow of my first acquaintance.

I recall how on one of our foregatherings I went with him to his publishers—for whom he had just written a novel—and waited in an anteroom while he transacted his business. Christie was living at the time in the Belgian Ardennes, and was very anxious to catch the night boat home.

When at length he came out, the desired cheque (on the Bank of England) was in hand. It was after 3.30 p.m.

"Frank," he cried, "I think we can do it—we must do it."

We got a hansom, and Christie told the driver that if he got to the Bank in time there would be a ten-bob tip for him. The man beamed. But it wasn't so simple as all that. In Cheapside we got hung up by a block that seemed interminable. In front of us was a bus whose conductor swung easily on his strap, insouciant of the passing minutes, and this so enraged our Jarvey that he gave loose rein to his tongue. He had a fine vocabulary. The conductor said not a word, but from bland indifference he became attentive, listening with grave absorption. At length he took off his hat and bowed his head. This inflamed the cabman to paroxysms of unthinkable objurgation. At last he paused to get breath, and at the same moment the bus began to move.

"Oh sir!" said the busman in tones of reverent admiration, "that *was lovely*. Will yer kindly tell me where yer preaching next Sunday. I should so like to 'ear yer at yer best."

Christie Murray went to Australia on a lecturing tour, and the night before his departure, going late into the Savage Club (of which I was then a member), I found him the central figure of a joyous impromptu supper party, gathered to bid him God-speed.

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"Frank," cried Christie, "there are three magnums left, so you're just in time." We sat fairly late. Others drifted away till we were alone chatting.

"I don't think," said Murray when we got into the street, "that I want to go to bed. It's my last night in England. Let's drive to Richmond."

We found a cab and started.

Christie explained to me that he had bought a new silk hat in order to impress the directors of the great shipping company whom he had just successfully interviewed in regard to a complimentary passage.

"There's great power in a silk hat," he said, and proceeded to elaborate the virtues of the gentlemanly headgear. When we got near Putney an idea seized him. He stopped the cab and got out. "Driver," he said, this horse of yours must be between fifty and sixty years old, and I don't suppose he's ever eaten a new silk hat in all his life."

The driver admitted humbly that the animal had not been accustomed to luxuries.

"Then he shall have his chance," said Murray, "late though it be." And when the horse refused, he sighed. "It's come to him too late in life," he exclaimed; "but if he won't eat it, at least he can wear it."

With that he carefully tied the hat on to the horse's head with a large silk handkerchief and we proceeded.

At Richmond we found the "Star and Garter" wrapped in slumber, and knocked in vain; but after a time the customary policeman loomed out of the shadows, and seeing a horse with a silk hat over one ear, and two quiet gentlemen, one bare-headed and frock-coated and the other in evening dress, knew us at once for persons of distinction. Somehow he procured us admission. And soon an ancient servitor brought us what we required. We walked in the

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gardens till dawn drew on, and then Murray demanded cigarettes.

To obtain these, said the man (all the bars being shut), he must knock up a tobacconist friend who lived across the road.

We waited in the hall, where was a long mahogany board decorated with two rows of brass buttons.

On this Christie began to tap out that old shivaree of Mark Twain's:

"Conductor, when you receive a fare, punch in the presence of the passengare a blue trip slip for a two cent fare," etc.

He had got as far as "Punch brothers, punch with care," when I noticed a strange commotion of agitated voices, sounds of opening doors and hurried movements in the upper parts of the hotel. A man came dashing downstairs tying on a green apron. A female figure in white fled across a corridor. Then the man came back with the cigarettes.

He looked at Murray, who punched happily on.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "ye'd best get into your cab and back to town. Yon's the fire alarm to every room in the house."

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CHAPTER XXI

EGYPT OF OTHER DAYS

The tourist's wrong impressions. A trip up Nile. The real fellaheen. A native village. Cholera. The sheikh and his help. The first railway and their reception by the natives. The sheikh visits the irrigation works. We preach a sermon on hygiene and get an Oriental reply.

GREAT BRITAIN HAS MADE EGYPT—the Egypt that when we took charge in 1882 was sunk in poverty, overwhelmed by debt, and so oppressed by extortionate taxation and evil government, that the hapless fellaheen groaned under the Khedivial yoke, as did the Israelites of Moses's time under the later Pharaohs. And having made the country infinitely prosperous by means of our administration, we are not unnaturally disposed to regard the present attitude of bitter hostility towards England and the English evinced by the Egyptians as rank ingratitude on the part of an unworthy and contemptible people. But how many of us have ever got inside the real skin of the Egyptian fellah—the instrument that is being used against us by fanatical agitators backed by Turkish and Russian propaganda ?

To a good many of us Egypt is familiar ground. We know Alexandria, spacious white Italian, wide of street with huge massive blocks of handsome buildings for the conduct of its commerce, avenues of marble mansions and flower-decked villas for the homes of its merchant princes, and charming suburbs, oases reclaimed from the desert and

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blossoming like the gardens of Iran, where the European community cools itself on the shores of the sunny sea. Cairo, too, we knew (better most of us than Alexandria), most hospitable, most magnificent, and most pleasurable of winter-abiding places that the world has ever known. We have lounged on the Savoy verandah and watched the world (our world, of course) pass and repass in swift carriages. We have sipped our coffee at Mena at the base of the great Pyramid, and jibed mildly within ourselves at tourists trembling on that great stairway.

We had our tea parties at Shepherd's, and dined and danced at the Kassr el Nil or the Citadel, and ventured our réals in the totalizers at Ghezireh. But throughout we had been in the midst of our friends, engaged each and all in pursuits identical with our own, and everyone much more our friends here than in the sterner social life of London. And to complete our satisfaction, our *joie de vivre*, the strings of camels, clover-laden, lurching by with joggling necks on the crowded bridge, the frequent fierce altercations among saffron-gowned cab-drivers beneath our verandah, the humble solicitations of the pock-marked Nubian juggler with his bag of snakes and his monkey, all served pleasurably to remind us that the native Egyptian existed to minister to our comforts and our pleasure, and that we, the salt of the earth, were for the time his masters.

Apart, indeed, from these innocent exhibitions of himself, the humble native of Egypt did not claim our attention. He was (and is) a good servant, an indefatigable boatman, an untiring bearer of burdens, a clamorous beggar, viciferous at a bargain, and for all these things we gave him backsheesh—or abuse—as occasion demanded, and there our acquaintance with him ended. Of course, we lazed through the bazaars of the Mouski, and said in bored tones " Aren't they quaint," and we saw maybe the

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twirling dervishes or watched a zikr, and exclaimed with a shudder "Aren't they disgusting." Some of us made a trip up the Nile by steamer or dahabeeyah, and thought they had learned something more about the "fellaheen." They noted probably how with every mile southward each labourer toiling naked in the shadow was blacker of skin than the last. They watched the frenzied rush of all the villagers to the steamer pier as the boat made to bank, marked (until the establishment of eye hospitals throughout Egypt) how a crowd of fifty men on the Scala boasted not more than sixty available eyes among them, and observed the loathsome poultices of flies that covered the face of each filthy pot-bellied infant who rode astride its mother's hip.

To such travellers was granted the chance to acquire the clay "*Anteeka*" ("Him plenty old, mistah"), whose fashioning had beguiled the ingenuous vendor during the long idle summer months. The village idiot, the village snake-charmer, the village deformity, petitioned for "baksheesh" from the pier barge; the village youths dived for piastres and fought for empty bottles in the muddy stream, and the fowls and the eggs and the green foods having come aboard, the canes of the gendarmes and the pier men rattled with brisk impartiality on the heads and shoulders of all and sundry, while the groaning hawsers were cast off and the pleasure-boat pushed off up-stream. The observer's last impression of the country was a free fight among the mob that would follow, falling over each other on the bank in the hope of a final piastre.

"And of such," the weary tourist would think, as the shouts and shrill appeals for largesse died away, "of such is the peasantry of Egypt."

This was never the case. Those servile mountebanks, clumsy jugglers, sellers of trash and shameless beggars, fawning, obsequious, insensible to blows or abuse, provided

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these resulted in money, were what the tourist had made them. They were no more typical of the Egyptian peasantry than Cairo as we knew it was typical of the natives of Egypt.

To see and know the real fellaheen it was necessary to dwell in native villages as I have done, say at the time I and Walter Goodall cleansed the Nile for the Egyptian Government during the big cholera devastation and afterwards on many occasions.

The sun was low and the hour propitious. Our way ran beside the canal bank, and on our right lay a long grove of date palms divided into plots (each enclosed within high mud walls) of 30, 50, or in some cases 200 trees. Valuable properties these palm groves, for each tree paid a yearly tax of only 2½d., and produced a profit of £1, while the upkeep was practically *nil*. To the left and dividing us from the canal bank, where the Archimedes' pump was slowly revolving, hoisting the water into the irrigation trenches, stretched a broad patch of vividly green corn, the second crop of the year. The village children were taking home the water-buffaloes, driving the great long-horned beasts with well-aimed lumps of hard sun-dried mud from the cool water, where they had lain all day, their snouts only above the surface; near by a great flock of chattering paddy birds had settled for the night on a widespread Hebéb tree, and overhead doves innumerable were homing to the cots that covered the roof of every house, and gave to the mud-built village all the aspect of a battlemented fortress. We passed a few peasants, adze on shoulder, a portly Hodja riding a white cow, and met some dozen laughing girls with pitchers on their heads, who clutched at their long blue gowns and held the hem in their teeth until we had gone by.

And then we found ourselves at the village gate, a lofty, ponderous structure that carried still further the

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"crenelated" illusion, save that it recalled at the same time the architecture of Ancient Egypt that we knew so well. But indeed architectured design does not appear to have changed in Egypt since the days of the Pharaohs, and the mud houses of to-day closely resembled in outward form those triumphs over time bequeathed to us by the builders of old.

The gateway passed (it was filled with a heavy wooden door that was closed at night), we emerged into a small public square. Several palms were dotted here, each surrounded by a wall, and in the central place was the lofty domed tomb of some old-time saint. The canal gleamed brownly on our left, enriched by the swollen carcase of a derelict donkey.

Away in the far corner, shaded by a wide-spreading sycamore, was a pale blue house with open front—the village shop—and beneath the tree were benches, and on these grave, black-gowned, turbaned men, smoking placidly. Nearer to us was the house of the head man, the Sheikh-el-Ballad. This was an imposing dwelling, with a verandah and white-painted palm trunk columns supporting the massive roof, and on the verandah was the sheikh pulling at a tall brass sheesha, in company of half a dozen cronies similarly engaged. Great quiet hung about the place, even the children sprawling in the dust were subdued, and from a house out of sight came, softened, the wailing of many women. The sheikh, an old friend, came forward to us slowly as we halted, spreading his hands dejectedly.

"Chota gae," he said, without preliminary (the cholera has come). "Ali Gabreen was taken in the melon patch two hours since."

Yes, the cholera had come indeed, and all the women of the village were gathered at dead Ali's house.

The Sheikh-el-Ballad was also head man of yet another village beside the one we had invaded, and the prosperous

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farmer of many feddans. He was an enlightened person and open-minded, and derided with great scorn the grosser prejudices that filled the breasts of his neighbours. He had travelled too, had bought and sold in the "Souk" of the chief town of the province, and had rubbed shoulders with Greeks and Affranghis, with buyers of cotton crops, smooth-tongued agents of agricultural banks, and large, red-bearded men of a tribe called "Eskozz," controllers of Makkinas in the sugar factories. He laughed, though a bit ruefully, when he recalled his first and only experience of the railway—the Sikka Hadeed—on which he once journeyed for two days. No doubt there was something untoward about the Makkina "Kan zaghlan azoon" (Perhaps it was angry). Else why should the manner of his leaving the train have been so painful to him? The village, his destination, had faded in the distance, the white road was sliding swiftly by, when lo! there was Abd el Fetah, his sister's husband, with his son on a white ass, hurrying to meet him at the station. He had passed, and they had seen him and had shouted to him, and he had jumped, of course, bundles and all.

"Ya Salaam, what a jump! That Makkina, well it was a creation of the Nazarene and zei el afreet Tamman" (just like a devil). However, praise be to Allah, no bones were broken. Disaster had threatened even before he started on that train. His young wife, who was childless, was crouching between the wheels of a truck (as women did when the railway was a new creation), to the intent that her marriage might be fruitful, when suddenly the Makkina walked on. "Vae! vae! Ya Seydna Zeynab" (now was your time).

She was spared—El hemd-el-Ullah—though like dead for fear.

Not all painful though was that memorable railway experience, for it was on this journey that the Sheikh-el-

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Ballad had visited the great pumping-station at Sherbeen. There, day by day and hour by hour, he had sat, a silent, unobserved black blot near by the ponderous machinery, and had gazed with awed feelings on the immense centrifugal pumps at work; had watched the huge cylinders revolve slowly but unceasingly; had dared give credence that those great, incomprehensible, tireless monsters were pouring thousands of tons of life-giving water into the canals that fed his own fields and filled his own purse. Thousands and thousands of tons of water, thousands and thousands of piastres, and no end to the supply. For when he raised his eyes from the oily revolving cylinders there before him lay the shining and familiar Nile, broad, immeasurable, spreading right and left as far as the eye might see.

Gay dahabeeyahs lay under the high bank, bright with paint and fluttering curtains, their slim spars tapering high above the palm tops; huge sailed Gayassas swept swallow-like up-stream against the quickening current, easily outracing the noisy post-boat that threshed her slow uncertain way southward, now bumping on a sandbank and now held motionless by an eddy; a great flock of pelicans massed in a snowy phalanx drifted past on the tide, journeying in leisured comfort towards their fishing ground on Lake Menzaleh, and away on the far bank a Sakeeyeh groaned and moaned always like some gigantic spinning-wheel, the small white cows that turned the wheel flashing ever and anon into view as they patiently plodded on, pursuing the unattainable fodder bound to the yoke pole just out of reach of their muzzles.

A peaceful, idyllic summer vision. And all the time the huge pumps revolved steadily and unceasingly, filling the canals of the watcher with water and his purse with piastres and his mind with contentment.

Nusrani or not, reflected the Sheikh-el-Ballad, as he

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trudged on his homeward way—and were the Inglees Nusrani by the way ?—they were a masterful if a strange people. Good folk, too ; they had abolished the corvée and the horn tax, and they had supplied water to the thirsty land—aye, and the Makkina obeyed them.

All this, of course, had long gone by, but his estimate once made, the worthy sheikh had never gone back from it. He approved of the Inglis and was not a little proud of the fact. Thus even in the delicate matter of epidemic disease he was prepared to concede much to our prejudices, who were his guests. Much indeed, but there were limits. He readily, for instance, acceded to the proposal that the ladies of the village should be removed from the small, dark, dirty hut, seething with venomous flies, where lay the corpse of the latest victim to cholera. "It is true," he said, "that these ceremonial lamentations might disturb us," and wholly on our account he proceeded with prompt politeness to adjust this little matter, aided efficaciously by his ready oak staff. He jibbed awhile at the suggestions that certain chemicals with which we were provided should be placed in the grave, but agreed after a time, being certain, as he owned, that we did not seek to prejudice the future of the deceased. More, he would himself undertake the task, so that no suspicions might be aroused.

A more difficult matter, however, was the disposal of the dead man's clothing. Here, indeed, our demands were opposed to all the traditions, and amounted to an attack on the most vital principles of thrift and economy.

"What ! destroy Ali's clothing because he died in it ! For what reason ? Didn't everyone die in his clothes ? Would we rob the children of the dead ? "

The suggestion that clothes might transmit the disease he flouted as irreverent.

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"Has a mantle a soul?" he asked; "and does Allah require such agents to enforce His decrees?"

It was in vain that we adduced an episode of the last epidemic. Then the men of the village had found a stranger dying (of cholera of course) in a rice field. The stranger had been a servant to an Affranghi, and was rich, and wore handsome dress. So the two men sat beside him and gave him water as he asked it, and apportioned his raiment out between them, waiting devoutly till the Angel of Death should touch him. To them appeared on the second day another stranger, who after awhile explained that the dying man was his father's sister's son, and that the inheritance must therefore be his. At this the two villagers who had watched many hours were incensed, and they beat the impudent claimant and pursued him with volleys of dried bricks, so that he fell into the canal and became a corpse. Then they went back to the first man, who by now was dead. So they laid him in the ditch, and taking his rich clothing returned to the village.

The next day was Friday, and they dressed themselves in the clothes and sat under the trees smoking, and the people envied them.

"Yes," interrupted the sheikh. "I remember, we envied them, but they died."

At last we thought our perseverance was to have its reward.

"They died," we replied, "and forty other men and women of this village perished after them. The disease was in the clothing as it is now in Ali's."

The Sheikh made a gesture of deprecation.

"Allah punished those two bad men,' he said impressively, "because they slew a stranger who perhaps had told the truth.'

"And what of the forty others?" we asked; surely we had got him now.

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The sheikh shrugged his black-robed shoulders. "Who but Allah can tell their crimes," he said simply, "and why death was adjudged to them?"

So too there was grave difficulty in the matter of the dead donkey, whose derelict corpse, riding high in the water against the canal bank, asserted itself in the dusk with a phosphorescent shimmer. The sheikh disapproved the removal of this mass of putridity.

"Each ass has its owner," he said, "and this dead ass, with the consent of Allah, belongs to someone unknown. Who shall say what has befallen the stranger, or whether did we tamper with his animal we might become involved in a criminal affair?"

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CHAPTER XXII

WILHELM VISITS THE SULTAN

The Sultan's capital is prepared for Wilhelm's visit. Abdul Hamid builds a palace and fills it with treasures. The Kaiser's embrace. An exchange of gifts. Effendimis and the statuettes. To the Holy Land, a reward to the driver. Jupiter's temple at Baalbek and the ex-Kaiser's vanity.

THE TURKS NO DOUBT still recall the last visit of the ex-Kaiser and Kaiserin to their capital and country, and to-day can freely express their feelings regarding it. The whole episode was so typical of the self-aggrandizement and overwhelming vanity of Wilhelm that it is worth while recording. I went specially to Constantinople for the Imperial visit, and arriving a week or so before the appointed time found *Der Saädet* (the Happy City) already in a fever of expectation over the impending event. Wilhelm had been there before, but on the former occasion, soon after his accession to the throne, his stay had been short, and the fictitious bonds of friendship which became so costly to Turkey had not yet become consolidated. In '98, however, his advent was hailed by Abdul Hamid and his entourage as an historic incident of the first magnitude, and the most elaborate preparations were made by the Ottoman authorities for his reception.

It was a time, as may be remembered, when touring Majesties were an anxiety to their hosts, for only a short month before the Empress of Austria had been foully murdered by an anarchist on a steamer jetty.

The Padishah was determined that no risk should

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accrue to his Imperial guests so long as they enjoyed his hospitality, and with that bland disregard and complete insouciance of liberties which is an Oriental attribute he made his arrangements.

Constantinople, by which I mean the great town itself and all its outlying suburbs, was then, as it has ever been, the haunt and abiding place of those tragic nomads, waifs from every land who wish to own to no nationality and to be subjected to no processes of law. The Sultan, quite aware of this, "did them down" so to speak. There was none to gainsay him.

One week before the date of the "All Highest" guests' arrival the Palace police swept through the city and its outlying villages with an official drag-net, into which they collected every person who could not produce evidence of his *bona fides* and obtain the immediate verification of his statements by the Embassy of the country of which he proclaimed himself (often unwillingly) the subject. These unfortunates were interned in the big barracks at Scutari opposite Stamboul, where they were provided with admirable food, wines and tobacco, and with such literature as was thought digestible by them. And in that internment they were held, not merely until the Kaiser had left Constantinople, but until he had completed his visit to the Holy Land.

Abdul Hamid's anxiety for the welfare of his guests also displayed itself in his large interest over the building and furnishing of the palace he had erected in the grounds of Yildiz Kiosk for their reception.

Electric lighting had been an unknown quantity in Constantinople until that time, a prohibited luxury indeed, something in the Turkish mind confusing *dynamos* with *dynamite*. But for Wilhelm's visit Abdul Hamid waived his scruples and dismissed his fears.

Day by day in the rapidly growing palace he personally

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inspected the installation of the electric light, the hanging of the many beautiful and most valuable pictures on the walls, and the laying and draping of the magnificent and priceless carpets (Turkey's chiefest inheritance), borrowed for this great occasion from the Imperial Treasury. Some of these marvellous carpets I may say were over 2,000 years old.

Well, the great day arrived. The Imperial yacht with their Majesties aboard anchored in the Bosphorus off the Dolma Bagtché Palace, and the great barge drew towards the marble quay with its Imperial freight.

Abdul Hamid was waiting at the head of the three steps, attired in his black *Stambouli* and with no decorations, but enhanced with that dignity which, whatever may have been his wickedness, the last of Turkey's real Sultans always possessed.

When the German Sovereigns landed from the barge the Sultan stepped forward, and raised and kissed the Empress's hand with quite un-Oriental courtesy; and this I must suppose was too much for the Kaiser, for he leapt forward and flung his arms round the neck of the astonished "Commander of the Faithful," who had some difficulty to free himself from this embarrassing embrace.

There were many quaint incidents in that visit to Constantinople. Of course accidents will happen, despite the best laying of plans, and it was the luck of the ex-Kaiser that he should insist in his drives through Stamboul on traversing those streets which not merely had not been specially prepared for his passage, but had been hurriedly used as a dumping-ground for the refuse from other thoroughfares specially cleansed by the municipal authorities.

However, there is a finality to all things, and the Imperial visit came to its appointed end.

The Emperor, with that pleasant acquisitiveness which

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has been his family's salient characteristic, gazed at, admired, and annexed most of the beautiful objects of art with which his host had adorned his apartments.

Many other elaborate and graceful gifts were made to him and to his consort. Among them the Sultan presented the Kaiserin with a magnificent emerald necklace and a diamond tiara and brooch of a value of £100,000.

Wilhelm, however, left Stamboul unsatisfied. His great desire had been to acquire the famous "Sidon sarcophagus," the reputed tomb of Alexander the Great, in which it was urged he wished ultimately to repose. Great outcry was raised as to this treasure of antiquity after the ex-Kaiser's departure, but I was later assured by high Turkish officials that he did not obtain his desire.

As may be supposed, between Monarch host and Monarch guest presents are interchangeable. So it was in this case. But nothing much was said in the press of the Turkish capital of His Germanic Majesty's gifts to his Ottoman host. So silent indeed were the authorities on this point, that I made it my purpose when on a visit to my friend Ahmet Djellaleddin Pasha, High Chamberlain of the Court at Yildiz Palace, to ask him upon this matter.

The Pasha looked at me smiling for almost half a minute before he replied, and then he said, "Of course His Majesty made a presentation to 'Effendimis' (our Lord), three statuettes in plaster, one of himself, one of his grandfather, and one of Frederic the Great."

"And were they," I asked nervously, "quite priceless memorials?"

The Pasha coughed. He looked nervously round the room; he even rose and pulled the heavy *portière* across the door. Then he turned to me with a wan smile. "Effendimis," he whispered beneath his breath, "believes they were bought in the Bazaar Allemand."

Now the Bazaar Allemand in Pera High Street is a sort of glorified Woolworths'.

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This prudent faculty for economy on the part of the "All Highest," which caused much comment in Constantinople, found, however, its chief expression during their Majesties' tour through the Holy Land. As in the capital city, every preparation had been made by the Sultan's officers for the passing of the Imperial tourists.

Whole towns in Syria had been swept and garnished, whole populations had been newly garbed to demonstrate their happy and prosperous condition to the great Western Monarch, who claimed as an ancestor the arch-pirate Torghut Barbarrossa. At Damascus a terrace even had been built on the hillside above the beautiful plain in order that the royal visitors might gaze at the dark beauties of the cedars on the Lebanon slopes.

The same elaborations awaited him at Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

And everywhere after his departure the whispered comments of all of this populace who had come in contact with him dwelt upon the extraordinary spirit of (let us call it) economy that characterized His Majesty.

At Damascus the Syrian driver of the royal carriage, who had laid out £10 on his gala costume, and who dashed his charge through the streets at break-neck pace to the imminent peril of the onlookers, was rewarded with the gift of—a mark—the giver pointing out with a smile that his own face was portrayed on the coin.

But perhaps Wilhelm's triumph of economic modesty coupled with self-laudation was displayed during his visit to the vast magnificent ruin of Baalbek; there, wishing a memorial of his progress through the Holy Land, he caused a brick to be hammered out of the wall of the glorious temple of Jupiter, and in that niche of shameless vanity caused to be cemented a panel ("made in Germany") which set forth that Wilhelm, descendant of the Crusaders, had honoured that temple by his presence.

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CHAPTER XXIII

A STUDY OF THE TURKS

Our misunderstanding of Turkish character and life. The real life of a Turkish household. The dual existence of a Turkish girl and her vain regrets. Marriage brings seclusion. The Princess dances. The real enmity between the Turks and Armenians. Hassan Fehmi Pasha's opinion. Faithful servants.

IN THIS COUNTRY even to-day we know very little about the Turks. For years our ideas of them were largely formed through the highly coloured pictures that we saw which generally represented a harem scene. As a rule these representations showed us a number of ladies lightly draped and covered with jewellery seated on the floor amid cushions, Oriental rugs, narghillis, and scimitars, and with always somewhere in the foreground a semi-nude negress playing on some quaint musical instrument beside a fountain. This sufficed as a picture of the East, and with the aid of this picture we clothed our fancies of what we believed to be the Turkish mind. Even those among us who by reason of the war sojourned for several years in Constantinople will own that they know little or nothing of Turkish domestic life. To begin with, the harem as generally depicted does not exist in Turkey. Hardly any Turk of these days or during the past forty-five years (which is the space of time I have known Turkey and its peoples intimately) has possessed more than one wife, albeit the laws of the Quran allow him a maximum of four. As may be readily understood, the

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economic conditions, alone, would have led to monogamy. In any ordered Turkish household each wife, should there be more than one, must have her own complete establishment, she must have her own servants, her own carriages, her own household and the command of it, and has full governance over her own children; so that it will be easily recognized that the average man can no more maintain a plurality of wives in Turkey than he can in Europe.

So much for the first wrong idea about the Turks. Next, and still to speak on the woman's side of the house, the Turk's wife rules her husband's household even more completely than does the English wife of the average British citizen. For instance, take a highly placed Turk—a Pasha may be, holding an exalted position (in past years perhaps a post in the Sultan's household). Any person anxious for praise, seeking promotion, desirous of obtaining favour, for whatever object he may have in view, makes it his first business to set his womenfolk to work to capture the suffrages of some lady, who through her husband will further his cause.

This, of course, is just as much a practice here at home as it is in the East, but it is a practice born in the East and which we have imported.

Let us take again the matter of children. Every Turkish boy is under the tutelage of his mother until he reaches the age of twelve to thirteen years, so that there, as here, it is the mother who forms the child's mind. When he has reached that age he goes perforce to the Military College or to the Softas Medresseh, and from that day on it may be truly said he ceases to be his mother's child, and thenceforth lives among the menfolk. The girls of a family circle remain always their mother's children until their marriage.

A good many years ago it chanced that I formed an acquaintance with a young Turkish lady. She was an

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intimate friend of the daughters of the late Sir Edwin Pears, whom I had known since my first years in Constantinople.

The daughter of an exalted official in the Palace of Sultan Abdul Hamid, she had been brought up as a young girl with the daughters of the principal families in the English community living, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, at Moda, which is hard by Scutari and Haidar Pasha, headlands at the Bosphorus entrance to the Gulf of Ismidt. Scutari is, of course, the hospital rendered famous by Florence Nightingale (the lady of the lamp), whose memory is revered by Turks nearly as much as it is by ourselves. This young Turkish girl when in our English circles played tennis and cricket and rowed in the boats of the Moda Rowing Club, and walked out and danced and went to parties with her English girl friends, dressed in all ways in the usual costumes of an English girl of her years. At times, however, she had to go back into her Turkish circle of friends to walk and to drive with her mother, a Georgian Princess (a Christian), who had herself been educated by French governesses, or with her father's mother, an almost full-blooded negress (who had been a slave until dowered and given in marriage by her exalted owner), who for long years was a power in the harems of Dolma Bagtché and Yildiz. On these occasions Miss Feredah had to observe all the then rigid rules of Turkish custom. Instead of her skirt and blouse and light shoes in which she played tennis or rowed with her English friends, she was perforce clothed in the charchaf of black silk, with a heavy black veil (this was an ordinance of Abdul Hamid) covering her head and face, so that none might know what was beneath its screen, and clad thus the whole party, guarded by a eunuch, she would accompany them to the slave market in Stamboul, where they would inspect the bodies of small Circassian girls, and bargain for

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them as they would in a neighbouring bazaar for carpets. Feredah frankly admitted that this costume and its accompanying pursuits and restrictions were abominable to her. When she was dressed in it not even her brother might address her in the street. In due course she married, and from that moment I personally lost sight of her; but Sir Edwin Pears's daughter retained some kind of restricted friendship with her, and told me a few years afterwards something of her story. She was rich, and enjoyed all the luxuries and as much of the potential happiness as could belong to her married state when wedded to a Moslem. She had children, and was greatly concerned as to their future, and this was her determination as revealed to her English girl friends.

"My children," she said, "shall be brought up as Turks of the old school. They shall learn no language, no Western customs or arts, or sciences of any kind, because when one has enjoyed the freedom among Europeans which was permitted to me as a girl the relegation to what is practically imprisonment becomes too terrible to contemplate."

I once met—long ago—another Turkish lady (the wife of a Prince of the Sultan's family), who was present at a ball at the British Embassy. She sat in a small room off the ballroom, and wishing to dance, the Ambassadress introduced partners to her. I was among those honoured who danced with her within the secluded apartment. She was not permitted to enter the ballroom. But with the new regime alterations are coming. Mustafa Kemal Pasha's young wife, we know, was at school at Chiselhurst, and is quite Western in her ideas.

The Turk is supposed to be more or less a savage, and especially is he supposed to be imbued with a rare fanaticism. This is sheerest error. I have lived among many Oriental people, and I do not suppose that anywhere in the Mahomedan world there exists a man more tolerant

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in general than the average Turk. Of course, people will cite against this the terrible and frequently renewed massacres of the Armenians (who are Gregorian Christians) in Asia Minor. But there was no fanaticism in this persecution. The secret of the animosity of the Moslem Turk against the Christian Armenian was a far simpler and more easily explained matter. It was this. The Armenian was the producer in all the six Armenian provinces: Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Kharput, Diarbekir, and Adana. You could not build a house, you could not cause gold to be beaten into jewellery, or brass made into a lamp, or indeed obtain any of your needful requirements without calling in the aid of an Armenian citizen. You could not even buy a yard of cloth or woollen stuff without recourse to the same agency. Thus, despite the fact that the Armenians were always down-trodden, that they represented in the past but one-third or even less than one-third of the districts they inhabited, that the Turk was exigent in taxing them to their utmost limits, the Armenian was always the richer member of the community, and therefore, should opportunity arise, the person to be despoiled. For when all is said and done, and despite his many good qualities, the Turk is extremely avaricious, and extremely envious of an alien race of fellow subjects more prosperous than himself.

To be sure he does not admit this. Indeed, talking it over with Hassan Fehmi Pasha (a former Minister of Justice, who at the time was civil Governor of Salonica), that gentleman proclaimed as his belief that the misfortunes of Turkey, the reduction of her territory, the formation of hostile kingdoms, out of Greece, Rumania, Serbia, and Bulgaria, was due entirely to the foolish—nay, even wicked toleration of the Turks towards their non-Moslem subjects. "If," said the Pasha, "we had dealt with these Rayahs" (the word means at once cattle and serfs)

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"as we should have done, and had forced them to embrace Islam, none of our present troubles would have arisen."

No doubt there was some element of sober truth in his argument.

So much for the relations between the dominant Turk and his alien fellow subject.

Yet in justice to the Turk one must say this. Despite his grasping and avaricious nature, the Turks would never have risen to massacre their neighbours unless they had received direct orders from their rulers to do so.

I have indeed known many instances of Turkish priests—and priests in most countries are regarded as essentially fanatical—risking their lives to protect Christian neighbours with whom they had lived in amity from the violence of a mob incited by the highest authority against them.

To give what may be a personal narrative illustrating the inherent honesty and genuineness of the Turkish peasant, I may say this: during the massacre of the Armenians in Constantinople in 1896, when various European communities suffered, the children of one of my friends were protected by their Turkish gardener; while during the revolution in Turkey in 1909, the children of my brother were placed by him in the hands of Suleiman, the family's Turkish caiquedji or boatman, and my brother and his wife had no doubt that Suleiman would, if necessary, give his life to save the children from harm.

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CHAPTER XXIV

COMMITTADJIS AND BRIGANDS

Origin of Committadji. My friends Stambuloff and Vassoff. The Bulgar fight for freedom. Primitive weapons. Assafoff and the Salonica bands. The rats take a hand and precipitate the *coup*. My brigand friends. O'Donovan, Schuver, and I meet Christoferos and defeat him. He entertains us with stories of his exploits. The unransomed captive. The Greek merchant's daughters. Mehmet Peklivan and Ahmet Alti Parmak retire into civilian life. Mehmet's disciplinary methods with his subordinates.

IN TURKISH THE AFFIX *dji* means man; sudji is the milk man and etdji the butcher. The Committadjis are the committeemen. They had their origin in Serbia and Bulgaria in the bad old days when hideous Turkish oppression grouped the bolder Christian spirits into numerous bands whose life purpose was to stir up their down-trodden brethren into a rising against Turkey.

It is to the committadjis that Yugo-Slavia and Bulgaria owe their present status as important independent kingdoms.

Later the Turks themselves adopted the system. Enver and Talaat Pashas and their associates who dethroned Abdul Hamid were Salonica committadjis. I have had many committadji friends; my acquaintance with some of them dates back to the early days of the Bulgarian risings, that led finally to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and the emancipation of the Bulgars. Stambuloff, murdered when Prime Minister under King Ferdinand, was an ardent committadji when I first met him. So also was

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Vassoff, the poet-novelist-conspirator who wrote that great book *Under the Yoke*, all of whose chapters were records of his own terrible experiences. With Vassoff I watched the Bulgars' pathetic attempts at a military organization that might serve them against the well-armed Turkish soldiery. I saw them at practice with their pitiful "chakmaks," which were flint-lock guns home-made, as were the impossible cannon that they constructed out of cherry trees bored, and hooped with iron bands. Constantly harried, frequently betrayed by weaker spirits among themselves, the committadjis' life was in those days a kaleidoscopic medley of hairbreadth escapes while it lasted, and that usually was not long. Often a stranger present would appear at our camp fire and whisper, and word went round that "Yanko" had been shot or "Christoff" captured and tortured to death.

A famous committadji whom I knew twenty years ago as Assafoff (he had several aliases) was a truly extraordinary man. Ultimately, of course, he was killed, but for years he had a charmed life amid perpetual dangers where his reckless daring saved his head. It was this man who organized the great plot at Salonica, whose aim was to terrorize the town, destroy Turkish authority, and render possible, amid the general confusion, the seizure of the city by a band of Macedonians from the mountains.

The great plot might well have succeeded but for the rats who gave it away. Not human rats be it said, but the great grey rodents with whom so many of our soldiers must be familiar.

It was this way: Assafoff's purpose was to blow up the Ottoman Bank (the chief building in the town) and the Custom houses, and at the same time cut off the gas and water supplies. It was a good scheme. Across the road from the bank in the main street was a small general shop kept by a Bulgar. From this place the committadjis

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tunnelled beneath the foundations of the bank. They laboured for eight months all unsuspected, supposed customers carrying out the excavated earth in their wide baggy trousers.

All was ready for the *coup* and a date was fixed, but just then the rats took a hand in the game. The bank parlours were overrun with the creatures. The cashier found a huge specimen seated on his desk, others were noticed wandering about the windows and stairway to the strong-room below. The bank manager sent for an architect to examine the vaults. *This gentleman, a Macedonian, was strangely enough unavailable*, but sent word that he would attend on the morrow.

The game was up, but Assafoff was not the man to throw in his hand. The mishap merely precipitated events. That night—it was a warm April evening—I was seated at our Café Rendezvous with Sir Alfred Billiotti (our Consul-General) and his wife, the French Consul-General and others, when the bank went up in the air with a tremendous roar and all the lights went out. At the same moment a procession of open carriages came dashing along the crowded street. In each vehicle stood a man holding a pistol at the driver's back, while two companions hurled bombs to right and left among the citizens on the side walk. The scene of panic and confusion that followed may be imagined. Assafoff, we learned later, spent all the night in the town dressed in the uniform of a Turkish officer of Zaptieh. I was told he was killed after dawn by a stray shot.

I have also met many brigands, some of whom might be regarded as being in the first flight of their profession. My earliest bandit rejoiced in the high-sounding name of Christoferos Aristarchi, and claimed connection with the Princes of Samos. But the outlawed princelet business proving unsatisfactory, he had " taken to the mountains,"

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which is in the Roum language the equivalent for "being wanted by the police."

Quite early in this his destined career he made for himself a name among the Klephts and Haiduts of Bulgaria and Montenegro. He was not perhaps so utterly abandoned a villain as, say, "Abbomminato-il-Crudele," or Baldazzari Indelicato, Sicilian bandits who earned a world-wide notoriety for ruthless and fiendish savagery towards the victims who got into their clutches. But if not in the first flight of successful blackguards, he had gained a quite useful reputation as a steady hard-working and wholly unscrupulous operator within the limits of his own field of action. He had a cousin, a financier, in Constantinople, but I do not know that they were in partnership.

My first meeting with Christoferos was hurried, and as far as he was concerned more incidental than he would have wished. With O'Donovan of Merv fame and Schuver, who then represented the *Standard*, I had started from Sofia to ride across the iron mountain to visit a sick friend. It was on this ride that O'Donovan and I were seized as spies and condemned to death, from which fate we were rescued, as I have told in another chapter. Even brigands have their bad days, and this was not the happy moment for Christoferos and the three of his young men who had elected to attack the innocent voyageurs. For when they made their appearance from behind a rock on the narrow path bounded on the one side by inaccessible rocks and on the other by a precipitous cliff, and called to us to "Stand and deliver," they found that they had erred in judgment. O'Donovan's revolver snapped three times in quick succession, and Schuver's weapon and my own were not wholly idle; with the result that in less time than it takes for the telling the three young men—punctured here and there, and very crestfallen—were rolling down the cliff face, clutching at bushes as they fell, while Christoferos lay, a crumpled heap, in the roadway.

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He was badly hurt, but—it was characteristic of the man—O'Donovan bound up his wounds and put him on his own horse, and we took him to Somakov, there to be hanged. But on the way, despite his soreness, he proved himself so human and so interesting that we desisted from our purpose, and instead laid him in hospital and nursed him until he was well. Ever after which time he was our devoted henchman. Indeed, he ultimately attached himself to Schuver, in whose company he saw ghosts and weird visions on the slope of Ararat, and finally died beside him in the Bahr-al-Ghazal, what time O'Donovan was losing his life with Hicks Pasha not one hundred miles away. But in his days of convalescence he let us into many secrets of the Klepht business and told us many stories, most of which are too gruesome for repetition. He preserved little reticence, but freely acknowledged the woeful pathos of some of the episodes he detailed. "It had to be," he said, "for such is the compelling power of the dread oath that binds us. Once a man has given himself to a Klepht community he must obey its laws, for not only would his own life be forfeit should he fail, but the wide-spreading vengeance of the band would reach each member of his family." Christo had many tales to tell that showed how inexorable was this brigand code.

On one occasion, for instance, he said, a captive was unable to find the ransom demanded. He was a nice man and the band all liked him. He had even nursed one of their members through a serious illness and had restored him to health. But the edict went forth, and the time limit was fixed, and the money did not come; instead his friends put the authorities in motion. That decided the captive's fate. "We drew lots," said Christo, "for executioner, and alas! the white bean fell to me. We were being pursued, and rode for our lives along a rugged goat track on the Demirdagh. At a given moment our leader

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gave the fatal signal. The captive, his eyes bandaged and his hands bound behind him, rode beside me, all unknowing, and chattering of his wife and babies. Above us on my right hand rose the iron cliff, below was a precipice 500 feet deep. But when that signal came I had to act, and even as I made him a laughing reply I thrust out my hand and flung him from his horse into the depths below. Even now on rainy nights I can hear his scream of terror as he fell."

He told me yet another tale. They captured two children, daughters of a trader at Salonica, of whom a ransom of £5,000 was demanded. "There had been a mistake," said Christo, "as to the man's financial position. In reality he was poor, and found it impossible to procure anything approaching the required sum. He sold his business, mortgaged his house, and borrowed at usury all he could obtain, but even then had raised less than half the amount exacted." Delays were accorded him as far as was possible, but without avail. At length the matter had to be resolved. He was told that on a given day at noon he would find his children at an appointed place. He went there, and moving towards him came one of the girls clad in a new gown and looking rosy and happy. Her sister, she said, was behind "with the man." Together father and daughter hurried along the path, and rounding a corner of the rock came upon the other little girl. She was seated by the roadside dressed in new clothes, with an ikon on her breast and with a bunch of flowers in her hands. But her throat was cut from ear to ear, and she had been dead for some minutes.

Among other brigand friends of mine were two notorious Asiatics, Mehmet Peklivan (Mehmet the wrestler) and Ahmet Alti Parmak (Ahmet the six-fingered). When I met them they had retired from the brigand business. Alti Parmak, indeed, had become head-keeper to Ahmet

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Djellaleddin Pasha, who was the Sultan Abdul Hamid's prime favourite and chief adviser; while his comrade Mehmet had entered Government employ as a Koldji, or tobacco revenue officer. It is one of the tenets of those Asiatic Haiduts that they prey on the rich and the traveller, and that they protect the villagers in their district against the extortions of Government officers. Acting in this way as local squire and self-appointed magistrate, my friend Mehmet was widely respected, and his decision on any disputed point was received as final. On one occasion, so he told me, a complaint was made to him that his lieutenant was carrying on an intrigue with the wife of a farmer resident within his borders.

Mehmet lectured his henchman and gave him solemn warning. But to no avail. The farmer again complained, and as is Turkish custom, claimed his powerful ally's aid. It was not refused. At midnight Mehmet waited on the outskirts of the village. On either hand were towering cliffs, for it was a lonely path in the Camel Neck Pass. The culprit appeared, and his chief accosted him. "It is you or I, Youssouf," said the wrestler, "and you have five minutes in which to make your pardon." Instantly Youssouf fired, and the bullet struck through Mehmet's cheek. That, however, was not the end. Mehmet Peklivan had not for nothing acquired his fame as a wrestler, and in less time than it takes to tell, the hapless lieutenant was trussed up and with his back against a tree stood awaiting execution.

"Fetch the husband," ordered the Haidut chief, and when that injured villager had arrived,

"Now," he cried, "the man who has wronged you is at your mercy. Take justice on him."

* * * * *

What happened to the erring wife I know not; but after all that was not the business of Mehmet Peklivan.

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CHAPTER XXV

EARTHQUAKES

The feeling of coming disaster. Chios. The fall of the hillside. Three waterspouts. The British Navy to the rescue. Constantinople, threatened with worst of twelve outbreaks. Damage to Greek churches. Sir Edwin Pears and I see right through his Prinkipo house from the steamer deck.

I HAVE BEEN IN A NUMBER of earthquakes, for the most part of small importance—for the countries in which I have chiefly travelled are constantly shaken by seismic disturbances—and on each occasion the effect on my nerves has been identical. The feeling of distress was perhaps less acute in the great and historic earthquakes than in the minor events, for in them there was more to see and to occupy the mind and to divert the attention from instant personal peril. For one thing, when an earthquake comes there seems to hang over the neighbourhood of its radiation a mysterious, but quite recognizable, atmospheric oppression, and it is a common thing for one man to remark to another: "This is earthquake weather." My first experience of a big earthquake was in 1881, when the island of Chios was convulsed. We had been two days ashore wandering among the villages, watching the peasant dances that took place at various wedding festivities, visiting the ancient and picturesque churches, and doing a little desultory shooting, and we were preparing to climb the lofty mountain that formed the southern end of the island, and whose verdant slopes,

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clothed in vineyards and olive groves and studded with hamlets, fell obliquely to the verge of the sea.

It was in the middle of the night when the catastrophe occurred. There had been, to be sure, several of those premonitory tremors and convulsions which we had noticed at other halting-places, but as they had led to nothing, and as we were informed they had manifested themselves here for wellnigh a month, we had regarded them as being of but slight importance.

And then of a sudden in the darkest hour of that warm close night came the disaster—instant, appalling, horrifying in its awful magnitude.

The whole island seemed to heave and rock, to dance almost with frenzied, maddening quiverings; dreadful rumblings filled the air as the earth groaned and trembled beneath us. This awe-inspiring vengeance of nature continued its threats until just on dawn, when to our unspeakable horror and dismay we saw the whole face of the mountain (we ourselves were in a village on the shore) detach itself from the remainder of the hill and fall over—vineyards, orange groves, olive orchards, villages and inhabitants—into the turbulent sea.

In that frightful moment no fewer than 4,000 people were hurled into eternity.

Even as this disaster occurred three huge water-spouts rose up in the sea not far from the shore and played like fountains, throwing their spray to a height of nigh a hundred feet. These, it may be said, still occasionally reappear.

The wild terror and absorbing grief and dismay of the Chiotes may be imagined. It would be idle to attempt to describe it. Many of the villages on this side of the island had been shaken into formless heaps of wreckage, and not a few of their inhabitants lay entombed in the ruins. The rest streamed out across the plains and down

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the hills in blind aimless flight, while along the shores bands of half-maddened wanderers moved to and fro, wringing their hands in anguish and calling piteously on God to help them.

The tremors and upheavals continued at intervals for more than a fortnight, during which time the British Navy had vessels riding at anchor outside the little harbour of the island, and officers and men spent their time ashore rendering such help as was possible to the afflicted.

Constantinople has been destroyed by earthquakes no fewer than eleven times, and in August 1894 it seemed likely that history would repeat itself once again. Many years had elapsed since such a disastrous visitation had occurred—indeed, so terrible a convulsion had not reached the city since the date in the fifteenth century of its conquest and occupation by the Turks.

If only from an antiquary's point of view,this earthquake was an unparalleled disaster. The mighty walls that Justiniani so gallantly defended against the Turkish hosts were split asunder in many places, and here and there were great falls of masonry which have made wide gaps in those venerable bulwarks of Stamboul. Again, incalculable damage was done to several of those small Greek churches in the Phanar quarter whose mosaic pictures portraying episodes in the life of our Saviour ranked among the world's treasures. St. Sofia itself, that glorious Christian cathedral that the Turks converted into a mosque, did not escape damage. A corner, indeed, of one of the surrounding domes was badly shattered. The erstwhile chapel (when Hagia Sophia was a Greek cathedral) within this dome had been closed, owing to a slight subsidence of its foundations, for some five centuries. Tradition said that when Mahmud rode into the great church on the heaped bodies of his victims, a serving priest had shut himself within the chapel, and had proclaimed that when

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next its doors should be opened the downfall of Turkish rule would follow.

It is said that after the 1894 earthquake this door could be slightly moved. Evidently not enough for the fulfilment of the priest's prophecy.

I was staying at Constantinople that summer, and at the time of the earthquake was a guest of the late Sir Edwin Pears, in his summer villa at Prinkipo—the chief of the four beautiful islands in the Marmora, an hour distant from Stamboul. Like everyone else engaged in business, we used to journey each morning by boat to Galata Bridge, take our midday lunch at the English Club, and the day's work done, return to the island in the evening for dinner.

On this day we were in town when the earthquake occurred. It was said later that the immediate neighbourhood of the Princes Islands was the central point—the hub, so to speak, from which the spreading forces of the disturbance radiated. (In one direction certainly its influence extended 200 miles inland.)

Beside Sir Edwin Pears's offices in Galata was a mosque, and in the gallery of its minaret the Muezzin was chanting the noontide call to prayer when the shock came. The oscillation of the earth crust hereabouts was so continuous —though not exceptionally violent—as to throw the tall minaret out of plumb, and to so displace its apex with the gallery attached as to close the stairway that connected it with the mosque floor. The poor priest therefore had no means of escape, while for a further poignant experience the gallery, now poised unsteadily on the spire, rocked violently with any movement he might chance to make. and threatened to topple over with him to the ground, It was twenty-four hours before this unfortunate priest was rescued. During the day there were several shocks of varying violence and duration. One of them brought

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crumbling to earth the massive vaulted roofs of many streets in the grand bazaar, a byzantine edifice that had resisted time and Turkish neglect ever since Mahommed's conquest. To this day, it is said, it is not known exactly what number of persons perished in the bazaar. The Turks never rebuild, never even trouble to remove or dig into ruins after the many fires that so often ravage Constantinople.

In this case they were content to leave the victims of the earthquake entombed where they met their fate. It was estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 were crushed beneath the bazaar roofs.

We, of course, were anxious to get back to Prinkipo, which report said had suffered severely. At length we got a steamer (for the islands), packed, of course, with business men, all as anxious concerning their homes and families as we were ourselves. We found Proti, the first island, in fairly good condition—the submarine earth wave had passed it by; Antigone, the second island, had been more gravely affected, many buildings had crumbled to the ground.

Halki, the third island, where Turkey has her principal naval college, had suffered severely. But even here no fatal casualties were reported.

And then we came to Prinkipo, along whose cliff-crowned shore we must steam to reach the steamer pier.

This cliff—as indeed all the island—is dotted with handsome villas, belonging to wealthy Europeans who make their summer homes here. And one of the prettiest of the villas (with gardens stretching down to the water edge of the little cove where his yachts lay at anchor) was that of Sir Edwin Pears.

As we steamed past the cove Sir Edwin gripped my arm. "Frank," he cried, "look at my house." I looked. The front had fallen out and down the cliff, and

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the back had fallen out into the garden behind. The shell lay exposed—all its floors and stairways and furnishings intact like a doll's house, from which both back and front had been removed.

However, no one of the house party had been injured. They had been at lunch in a room at the back when the first shock came, and Lady Pears, accustomed to earthquakes of minor severity, had at once sent her party out into the garden. She herself had hurried into the hall and had called up to a sewing-maid who sat working in a verandah outside the drawing-room windows.

"Come in quickly, Caliope," she cried, and as the girl came running into the room the whole front of the building fell out on to the cliff.

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CHAPTER XXVI

A NIGHT ON THE MARMORA

The Turks and ourselves. Germans seize opportunities. A pleasant cruise with a Pasha.

FOR LONG YEARS after the Crimean War a great sympathy endured between the British and the Turkish peoples. The Turks were enthusiastic over everything that was English, and I, who have known the Turks intimately for forty-eight years, have received from them innumerable proofs of the high regard in which they held us. This feeling of affection and respect was naturally stronger and more lasting in the interior of the Empire than in the capital, where memories are shorter and emotions more capricious. Up-country, when I wished to buy a horse, among the many animals brought for my inspection would be produced not a few whose owners would proclaim that their beast was a descendant of a "Bono Johnny" mare—i.e. a mare bought out of the English army at the close of the Crimean campaign. This principle applied to many matters of daily intercourse. A Turk would be recommended to me as reliable because his word was as that of the English. An article was well made—it was like English goods. And this excellent spirit might have been maintained until to-day had not we made it our purpose throughout nearly a quarter of a century before 1914 to reject and turn down its every manifestation. Abdul Hamid was a criminal, and Turkish

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administration under him was infamous. But the Turks themselves suffered nearly as cruelly under Abdul Hamid as did his non-Moslem subjects. But instead of recognizing this, we wilfully associated the entire Turkish nation with the abominations committed by order of their Sultan.

This was Germany's opportunity, and Kaiser Wilhelm was not slow to profit by it. During many years, while the gulf between England and Turkey widened and deepened, German influence at Porte and Palace, and German commercial enterprise throughout all Turkey's provinces, was developing with mighty strides. The great Teutonia Club in Pera (where the Kaiser himself spent a long evening in 1898, making an impressive speech to its members within closed doors) was the nursery and hotbed of a vast system of intricate intrigues for gaining a firm hold on every major interest within the Sultan's dominions. The Great War showed us how admirably laid were these plans, and ourselves aiding them, how complete was their success.

Yet ever so many prominent figures still held place in high Turkish society whose sympathies and affections remained steadfastly English, as the following recollection will show.

It was the mastic hour—that pleasant time just before and after sundown when all the Moda folk stroll up and down the terrace on the cliff, and sit about the little green tables under the trees overhanging the bay, and, while they sip their mastic or their coffee, chat over the day's affairs, and gaze out upon the ever-changing panorama spread before them : the Prince's Isles, with their thousand windows, burnished rubies in the setting sun, and the foliage of their pine groves fashioned into lacework against the glowing sky ; the laden steamers bustling across the glassy Marmora to the different scalas—the harsh shriek of their whistles subdued in the evening hush—the fishing

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boats and market caïques and lumbering mahones drifting idly shoreward under light sail; the clouds of gulls circling around the refuse boats that have just anchored off Seraglio Point, whose town of pagoda palaces within the old battered walls is even more wondrously fairylike—more of a picture from the *Elf Lailet wa Lail*—in this purpling light than when gleaming all golden in the rosy dawn. The pretty, bright-haired English children were playing and running races about the terrace, newly released from the broiling day's confinement within doors; the Greek minstrels, amateurs all, thrummed their zithers and guitars, and blended their voices—a thought nasal, maybe, but what matter?—in the "Dio Poulakia," or "Ja Roupi," or others of the quaint and tuneful songs that they love so well, and that seem so thoroughly in place amid these surroundings. Down in the placid bay the Greek sailors on yawl and cutter were beginning to make ready for the night. The boating parties were returning from up-stream; at the yard of the Kadikeui Rowing Club the skiffs were being lifted from the water, while their recent crews swung white-flannelled legs from the wall, where they sat in a row. Over at Fanaraki, whose lighthouse was yet unillumined, a vagrant stork chappered somewhere in a tree-top.

As we sat, and sipped, and chatted, in happy obedience to custom, the great white yawl—the pride of those waters—which we had believed cruising somewhere about the Kavaks, at the mouth of the Black Sea, suddenly swept round the Point, her towering canvas all aglow, slid lightly across the little bay, and coming gracefully about, picked up her moorings off Fanaraki, with that easy neatness and instant obedience to command and total lack of bustle in lowering sail which are the sure signs of thorough proficiency in the steersman and bright alertness in the crew. Five minutes later the tiny petroleum launch had

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been lowered from her davits, and puffing like a toy thing towards the scala, landed a bronzed Greek sailor, who brought my host a pencilled card. "Come aboard," it said. "There is half a capful of wind, Kartal way, which does not seem to be falling with the dusk. Bring friends and whisky."

This was the kind of invitation to soothe the souls of tired men after a day of such scorching heat that to touch aught of wood or metal exposed to the sun entailed a blister, and we were not slow to respond; the sort of invitation that frequently came to us from Zehri Bey, the son of old Ahmed Vefik Pasha, whom I had known as Governor of Adrianople during the Russian War. A ragged urchin—these things are so easy here—scurried barefoot up the hill for boat-cloaks and other comforts; and speedily our procession of two, the humming launch and the curtseying dinghy, trailed across the bay towards the rosewood gangway of the *Lalla Rookh*, where our host, coatless and silk-shirted, with fez on head and pipe in hand, awaited us with kindliest greeting. And so up sail and about, and round Fanaraki Point, and streaking out in the middle channel between the isles and the Asiatic shore. Not, however, for long; for soon we tacked inward again to bring us as near as might be to the pier at Bostandji, a pretty shore village shaded by wide-spreading trees, and dotted with tasteful villas and chalets, and here and there dwellings so imposing as to claim the name of palace, where Moslem and Christian, Turk and Greek, Armenian, German, and Englishman dwelt side by side in pleasant friendliness. The mimic siren tooted here, and the toy launch puffed out with another card or two, and with as brief delay as might be our party was enriched by several new arrivals. When indeed we put out once more seaward, we represented nigh as many nationalities as a European Conference.

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Not that conferring was at all our purpose. Far from it. Let the ragged fate of nations occupy those they concerned; we had far other business, and to it devoted ourselves wholehearted. What time the *Lalla Rookh* streamed ribbon-like along the shadowing coastline, we had almost enough to do to enjoy the soft night air, the passing villages whence came to us all the evening sounds that make for peace: the lowing of the home-going buffaloes, their wanes creaking behind them; the high clear resonant voice of the Muezzin aloft on the tiny minaret of the humble mosque; the scraping of boats drawn up on the shingle after the day's work; and here and there the clop-clop of the axe of some belated wood-cutter, borne to us in measured staccato across the rippling waves; laughter of children and of girls; music, both Greek and Turkish, from the cafenets along the little quays; all the many voices of a summer night where every-one and every creature is abroad; and all this soft semi-indistinct murmuring broken now and again, yet somehow not unpleasantly, by the sudden clamour of a village dog-fight—some terrific duel between the curs of rival quarters—or the dulled roar of a distant train speeding Ismitwards. Lights twinkled out one by one in the windows as we glided by—and what sight is prettier when seen from the water?

Our host, tiller under arm, and lurching gently with it, squatted cross-legged on a cushion, cocked anon a querying eye at his dimming canvas, or sought the breeze with his cheek, and hummed or whistled softly to himself, or interposed a word or a joke in some one or other—it made no matter—of the four or five languages which were the common property of all on board; while we, his guests, lay grouped around him stretched in happy idleness on soft, light, mattresses, cigar or pipe or even narghili fragrant about us, with long glasses, in which ice tinkled

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musical, convenient to the hand. And the talk flowed, and the guitar tinkled—for we ranked musicians in our company—or the plaintive zither sighed sweet Magyar folk-songs, while the placid night gathered soft plumes about us.

Yet not for long, alas! might we indulge in idleness. Our host's brother had insisted on cooking the dinner, and we could hear him for'ard in the galley, amid his clanking tinware and sizzling saucepans, singing in Turkish snatches from *Madame Favart* and *The Geisha* in a rich mellow voice, to an accompaniment improvised from a tin bowl and an egg-whisk. Good cook as he proved, however, he had that besetting weakness of the amateur—need of the services of all he might recruit; and so clamoured, between ditties, for aid, and so reproached us, individually and by name, that for very shame we rose at length one by one and loafed galleywards, to return later, one with an embryonic sauce, and one with the nucleus of a salad, or with oranges to be cut for a compote, or potatoes which should be resolved into their elements by the agency of a "masher."

And while thus we worked for our corn, the treacherous wind fell, alas!—maybe wanting rest, like others—aye, fell and dropped and ceased to be; so that needs be we must again requisition our gallant toy launch to tow us inshore to an anchorage. Yet our luck had so far held that we now found ourselves some 50 yards only from a village larger than most along these shores. I have forgotten its name, and it is immaterial, but our arrival seemed to produce considerably more sensation among the humble, friendly people of the place than would the advent of a British squadron in a Mediterranean port. Slumbering dogs rose and barked wildly. Men's voices called loudly one to another: "Ya Suleiman," "Ya Mehmet," "gel janem chabouk!" or a like appeal would

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be shrilled in Greek to Leonidas or Pandeli, and Greek or Turkish voices would make reply that its owner was "coming quickly" as requested. Soon they were all around us—Greeks and Turks alike—their boats laden with fruits and fish and other commodities, and each and all eager to welcome Fehri Bey and his friends, whose gracious patronage made the prosperity of the little community.

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CHAPTER XXVII

MY SUCCESSES

Joy in small personal success. I act as medicine man. The patients. Croton oil. My Berkfeldt filter. The Caucasian Han. Saxin pellets. My ice machine. Steevens, Maud, and I foregather. My servants and horses are returned fit and well. The way we worked the carriage of dispatches. My "freezer" arrives. We test its efficiency. "Lord of the drinks."

I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT that there is perhaps more joy to be derived from small personal successes, that really matter nothing to anyone save oneself, than accrues from major achievements that have even been termed notable. Certainly I find an abiding satisfaction in the remembrance of a few of these little triumphs.

One such was the reputation that I gained at various times as a Hakim Pasha—as medicine man in various wild countries, Abyssinia, Somaliland, the Sudan. As everyone knows, among these wild folk, every white man is or was reputed to be a healer of the sick. Maybe in this enlightened age, when they probably have telephones worked by slave labour at Addis Ababa, and a jazz band in the Gondar Palais de Danse, things may be different, but in my time the arrival of an Englishman in any off the route locality invariably brought next morning around his hut or tent an assemblage of the populace vociferous in demands for medicine. I quickly grew so accustomed to this visitation that I was always prepared for it, and my faithful servants thoroughly enjoyed the staging of

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the impressive act. By the kindness of Messrs. Burroughs and Wellcome I have generally journeyed in wild lands richly equipped with one of those beautifully fitted medicine chests, the mere contemplation of which is almost a panacea for anything short of a fractured limb; and before I made my appearance Hanna and Suleiman would set out a little green canvas table with the glittering nickel chest open upon it—all its bottles clad in their vulcanite cases and a sheaf of silvery instruments gleaming in the lid; the whole outfit a joy to behold. The patients always squatted in a close-packed semicircle, their shields before them, their spears beside them, and their swords across their knees. And after salutations the play began.

As a rule I had only to deal with such minor afflictions as humble folk at home correct with a dose of pills or tabloids obtainable at an oil shop, and my treatment was always the same. The would-be patients all jabbered at once and indicated with significant gestures the nature of the trouble. I silenced them with an uplifted hand. Then Hanna led forward the biggest and loudest clamouring of the throng, a chief probably, a captain, or a little king, and I felt his pulse, pulled down his lower eyelid, put a stethoscope to his heart, and then smiled. "I can make you well, friend," I would say, and fumbled elaborately among the bottles, opening one vulcanite case after another to find the one that should exactly fit his case. In truth, however, it was only one bottle that I sought, and always the same: the Croton oil bottle—that and a broad camel's hair brush. With this I would paint the outstretched tongue once, twice, perhaps more, and then slapping him on the shoulder, send the man back to his place in the circle. So it went on; always the careful frowning search for the right drug, invariably the application of the Croton oil.

Frequently the already treated broke out again in

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demands asking yet further treatment. But fairly soon they quieted down, and slunk off silently into the bush. Until, all the captains and the kings having departed, I would find myself a free man for the day. It was perhaps somewhat drastic physicking, but my ministrations made me many grateful friends.

* * * * * *

Another of my triumphs has been achieved by the aid of a Berkfeldt filter. With this admirable and hygienic apparatus I have gained a reputation for magic power in many strange places. One tale will suffice. It was in a caravanserai on the Turco–Caucasian frontier. In the vast outer Han a thousand double-humped camels were barracked, kneeling under their loads. In the great inner hall were gathered the drivers, huge shaggy fellows, wild-eyed as their beasts, in great mushroom-shaped sheepskin papaks and red leather pushteens, with a daub of henna dye on one half of the beard, and at the waist a 2-foot straight, double-edged Khama with a mammoth ivory hilt. Maybe 150 of them were present.

I sat up on the leewan at the top of the hall, beside the stove and the Samovar, and the caravanserai bashi and his assistants busied themselves in making tea for the company.

It was winter time, and there was a little difficulty about water, for melted snow is frequently very black and ugly. So I turned to the tea-maker and asked, "didn't he prefer water that was clean?" The man merely shrugged his shoulders good-humouredly. It was a sufficient reply; but this was my opportunity. "Bring me," I said, "a deep vessel. Now fill it with melted snow; now put in some earth, and some tibbn (chopped straw), anything you like." It was done. I then produced the Berkfeldt, and pumping, drew from the dirt into a big lemonade

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jar a supply of crystal clear water, and pouring out a glassful drank it down. Then the jar was passed round amid exclamations of amazement and delight, not unmixed, perhaps, with suspicion.

But we nearly *busted* my precious filter that evening, for everyone wanted his tea made from the clear water, and I dared not take the pump to pieces to clean the bougie.

En dépit de cause, therefore, I made a diversion. All Tartars and Persians take their tea sweetened to excess, so after exhibiting a handful of tiny Saxin pellets, I offered the company a succession of samovars of tea so cruelly sweet as almost to bite the tongue.

After that I was a king, and later found that my reputation for uncanny powers had preceded me wherever I went.

But perhaps my most joyous success of all was the triumph achieved by the freezing apparatus that I brought out to the Sudan in the summer of 1898. Driving down Holborn, I had seen an ice-making machine displayed and much advertised in the window of a rather famous shop. So I went in and bought one, the firm undertaking to convey it in good time to my agents in Cairo. It was a handy arrangement, consisting of a large zinc cylinder that revolved in an outer wooden bucket; the space between cylinder and bucket was to be filled with two kinds of salts or crystals, which blended produced the freeze. The whole contraption, I estimated, together with a hundredweight and a half of the freezing mixture contained in two barrels, would be but a light load for a camel, even if added to it was a suitable cargo of bottles of sorts—say lemonade—a case or two of light beer for emergencies, and a box of drinking-cups.

So far good; and I started back to the Upper Nile (travelling via Constantinople, where I had some dinner calls to pay), with high anticipations of the delight with

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which my acquisition would be welcomed by all my soldier pals who had not, as I had done, enjoyed a breather home after our Atbara fight.

For this, the final lap of the three years' advance to Khartoum, George W. Steevens (of the *Daily Mail*), Will Maud (of the *Graphic*) and I were again to be messmates, with myself in charge of arrangements by reason of my knowledge of Arabic and the country. It chanced that we converged upon our rendezvous, which was the big base camp at the confluence of the Atbara with the Nile from different points of the compass. I forget where Steevens had been, but Maud had spent the winter and spring in India, on a small frontier campaign, while I, as has been said, had made Constantinople my last station. As a result we did not meet until we got to the Dahileh headquarters camp, but we carried on a lively exchange of telegrams, chiefly with reference to the necessary provisioning of our mess for a prolonged period, throughout which no fresh supplies would be procurable. All, however, was arranged with but little trouble, and our last exchanged cables were identical in sense: "All supplies adequate except drinks."

My own personal arrangements were already complete, for all my staff of servants, grooms, and camel-men had been with me for the past two and a half years, and I had left my horses and camels in the care of friends in some of the British battalions, who were glad to have the use of them for the mere charge of seeing that my men looked after them and kept them in condition. I may add that this understanding worked admirably, and on arrival at the advanced base I found all well with my numerous company of men and beasts.

Lest this description may seem to savour of extravagance, I may mention that in Nile campaigning it was necessary to prepare a series of daks for the quick conveyance of

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dispatches to the nearest R.E. telegraph station, sometimes fifty miles distant. Moreover, from the first I had always made it my business to be entirely independent of assistance from headquarters in all things except the use of the wires. Thus I was permitted to have as many men and animals as I required, provided only that I made my own arrangements for feeding them. It was a plan that suited both the supply department and myself, and I have found it work very well in nearly every campaign in which I have taken part.

At Cairo, where I picked up a few good horses for Will Maud, I could hear no tidings of my ice machine. A number of cases addressed to me, said my agent, had gone up the river. No doubt it would be all right. But it was a long time until I heard of it again—weeks indeed passed before walking one day through the Nuzzle (the commissariat department stores) at railhead, I came across a big wooden case and two barrels, that were sweating horribly in the sun, all addressed to "Frank Scudamore, War Correspondent of the *Daily News*—Keep in a cool place." The poor things had been stewing in the sun for five weeks, and it was hot that summer. Only the day before I had returned from a fifty-mile ride I had made up the river to lunch with Hector Macdonald at the advanced post. It had been an easy enough trip with a three-relay dak, and I had done it at a hand gallop without discomfort in five hours. But it was undoubtedly warm, and Wingate had chaffed me about it when I entered his darkened tent on my return. "Temperature registered in the shade box at the hospital (he said) at 11 a.m. 184° F., and sun heat 182°." Sun heat 182°, and my unfortunate freezing mixture had had five weeks of it!

Fortunately I had said nothing about the thing, but though discomfited I still had faith in that excellent

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old-fashioned firm in Holborn, and I persuaded Wingate to have it put in orders that there would be cool lager, etc., at the Scudamore–Steevens camp at 11 a.m. on the morrow and all friends were invited.

All that evening I was unmercifully chaffed. The news had gone round and visitors kept riding up to our quarters and reading off the white lettering: "Keep in a cool place." "Sluice frequently with cold water." Ha! ha! "Cold water! Scuddy, old man, mind it's cold."

But they were all wrong. The brave little machine amply justified its existence next day and silenced all scoffers with deliciously cool draughts of lager and "etc." It was a great scene when it made its debut. There was no shade anywhere—not a tree, not a shrub—and as the machine had travelled for weeks on camel back, its metal parts and the barrels containing the freezing mixture were nearly red hot. But I had faith in it, and it did not let me down. Everyone turned up: Wingate and Slatin, Rundle and Rawlinson (now cooler probably in India in his quarters as C.-I.-C.), Lawrie, fresh from experiments with his guns, which had developed a trick of going off both ends at once, and a dozen others. Even the Sirdar chanced to pass that way in the nick of time, thanks to the guidance of Watson, his A.D.C.

And we all stood round and waited—dry-throated—while my poor black servants wrestled with the Ibn Sheitan (or child of the devil) as they called it.

The sweat poured off those natives in streams, but as the cooling process developed their first incredulity gave place to a wild enthusiasm. Their eyes shone, their teeth gleamed.

Near by stood Defallah, my Sheikh el Mushrabat (lord of the drinks), *Anglicé* butler with his satellites, beside a camp table laden with Agra cups, enamelled mugs, and glasses improvised from bottles cut in half.

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The great moment came; the cold lager was poured into the Agra cups, which beaded gloriously, while the mugs and half-bottles almost sizzled at contact with the icy stuff. Followed applause, congratulations, encomiums. Truly it was worth it all: worth the toil of those eager niggers, worth the weary journey of the patient camel. It was one of those happy moments that linger in the memory. It had but one little chagrin in it, and that was personal. Lager doesn't like me, and I never touch it.

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EPILOGUE

IN THE BINDING TOGETHER of a sheaf of memories, many—it is surprising how many—must be left out, and in the present volume this is especially the case, because I have endeavoured to avoid so far as is possible descriptions of battles and of warfare in general. The Great War, with its stupendous tragedies and its records of unthinkable horrors, has dwarfed practically to nothingness all previous fighting; to be sure, it mattered little to the campaigner who "got his packet," whether it came to him in a mere frontier scrap or in a vast battle of world-forces that altered history. But the reading public could not to-day be interested in these minor affairs, and for the same reason I have omitted details of my Armenian experiences, harrowing though they were, and of tragic episodes in revolutions and upheavals in various parts of the world.

Many reminiscences I would gladly have included—of Morocco, of Abyssinia, of Spain, of the Caucasus, and of lands nearer home, among them Ireland. There have been shooting expeditions, and yachting tours, and small exploring adventures; and there are many friends to whose kindness and comradeship during a fairly crowded life I could devote chapters. The exigencies of space have perforce curtailed these recitals.

Looking back, however, over the years touched on in these pages, I find two abiding and outstanding memories with me throughout. The one is of the vast amount of enjoyment and amusement and fun that permeated each

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checkered experience. There were real hardships and suffering, and almost every conceivable discomfort, at times; but all these are as formless wraiths in my recollection (I don't think they ever took much hold on me), and only the pleasant and happy recollections remain.

Again, as I pass events in review, I recall with infinite gratitude the unfailing kindliness and helpfulness that I have received from innumerable "persons in authority" with whom I have been brought in contact, in one country and another. Not only in exalted representatives of my own country have I found this amiable and courtly spirit revealed, but, with very rare exceptions, I have met with almost invariable and often elaborate courtesy from foreign State functionaries, administrative officers, and police officials, who, had they wished, could very easily have put spokes in my wheels, but who have gone out of their way to render me assistance in my undertakings.

It has no doubt been in the nature of things that I should make speedy acquaintance and often form friendships with soldier-men and sailors met under campaigning conditions. But there has been more. I think I can say that, arriving as a stranger in a strange city, I have never passed twenty-four hours without meeting at least one generous-spirited Briton—sometimes an important citizen, sometimes a quite humble resident—ready and willing to give me the benefit of his knowledge, and to show me the ropes and advise me as to what to do and what to avoid in circumstances of difficulty.

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